

UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA
FACULDADE DE LETRAS



The Solaristic System

Christine Reeh

Orientadores: Prof. Doutor Carlos João Nunes Correia,
Prof. Doutor Markus Gabriel

Tese especialmente elaborada para a obtenção do grau de doutor no ramo de Filosofia, na
especialidade de Estética e Filosofia da Arte

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RESUMO

"O Sistema Solarístico" propõe explorar o potencial específico do cinema para colocar questões ontológicas e epistemológicas sobre o real, a realidade e a sua reprodução. O título é deduzido da 'ciência solarística', uma ciência fictícia introduzida no enredo do filme "Solaris" de Andrei Tarkovsky. Na presente dissertação este filme é abordado como uma metáfora para a apreensão humana do real da realidade, sob a premissa do real enquanto espaço reservado para a verdade ontológica.

O objectivo da 'filosofia solarística', que será gradualmente introduzida, é a investigação dos conceitos e princípios de pensamento levantados pela existência do planeta Solaris que constitui um desafio inatingível para o conhecimento humano. Apesar de orgânico, o planeta Solaris é remanescente de um aparato comparável ao cinematógrafo: reproduz seres que parecem reais, mas que, tal como as fotografias ou as personagens fílmicas, são estranhos no seu estatuto ontológico. O principal conceito estético do filme apresenta-se como uma presença de algo ausente ou um ser sem ser. Este princípio transcendente, de uma existência que não é, evoca os conceitos de Real de Jacques Lacan assim como a relação entre o ser e o Nada presente no pensamento de Martin Heidegger. Convoca também alguns dos mais importantes princípios cinematográficos definidos por Stanley Cavell, Gilles Deleuze, Roland Barthes. Solaris estabelece-se assim como um exemplo da densa auto-reflexividade do cinema.

O sistema solarístico propõe uma ontologia específica do cinema que parte da sua natureza catalisadora de um modelo múltiplo de realidade, do dispositivo não humano e tecnológico que convoca uma mudança epistemológica, e, por fim, da reprodução automática do ser e do real da realidade.

A nossa investigação estabelece um estatuto privilegiado do cinema enquanto matriz da realidade, que a "reproduz directamente" de forma diferente das outras artes (Pasolini). Contudo, a análise desta completa reprodução audio-fotográfica da realidade constitui um complexo desafio ontológico, que não pode ser expresso sem apresentar uma interrogação metafísica: se a realidade é reproduzível, qual é então a sua natureza fundamental?

Palavras-chave: cinema, filosofia solarística, Martin Heidegger, o real da realidade, a reprodução da realidade

SUMMARY

"The solaristic system" is the title of our project to explore the specific potential of film to raise epistemological and ontological questions about the real, reality and its reproduction. The title is derived from the "solaristic science", a fictitious science introduced in the film "Solaris" by Andrei Tarkovsky. In the present thesis this film is understood as a metaphor for the human comprehension of the 'real of reality', under the premise to take the real as a placeholder for ontological truth.

The main proposition of the 'solaristic philosophy', which is gradually introduced, is bound to the concepts and principles of thought raised by the fictitious planet Solaris whose nature is an unattainable challenge for human knowledge. Although an organic entity the planet is reminiscent of the cinematographic apparatus: it reproduces beings which seem to be real, but who - just as photographs or film characters - are puzzling in their ontological status.

This transcendent principle of *an existence which is not*, evokes the Lacanian *Real* as well as the Heideggerian correlation of *being and Nothing* and constitutes one of the most crucial concepts pertaining to film. This principle will be elucidated. Moreover, this thesis refers to and analyses some of the most important principles of film defined by Cavell, Deleuze, Bazin, among others. Through this analysis "Solaris" is established as an example of dense self-reflexivity of the medium film.

The solaristic system is the proposal of an ontology of cinema based on the catalysing nature of a multiple model of reality, on the analysis of a non-human and technological apparatus, which evokes an epistemological change, and on the investigation of an automatic reproduction of the being and the real of reality.

Our investigation thereby privileges *film as a matrix of reality*, different from the other arts, in virtue of it "directly reproducing reality" (Pasolini). Anyhow, the analysis of this audio-photographic reproduction of reality constitutes a complex ontological challenge, which cannot be phrased without presenting a more radical, metaphysical enquiry: If reality is reproducible, what then is its fundamental nature?

Key-words: Cinema, solaristic philosophy, Martin Heidegger, the real of reality, cinematographic reproduction of reality

RESUMO DESENVOLVIDO

A reprodução técnica da realidade é uma das principais questões filosóficas levantadas pelo surgimento do cinema no final do século XIX, e leva a um questionamento da natureza ontológica tanto da realidade como do cinema. No entanto, a análise desta reprodução da realidade audio-fotográfica e em movimento constitui um complexo desafio ontológico, que não pode ser expressa sem apresentar uma interrogação metafísica também sobre a realidade: se a realidade é reproduzível, qual é então a sua natureza fundamental? Como podemos no fundo afirmar que é reproduzível aquilo que se retira à inteligibilidade? Se a realidade muda de qualidade pela reprodução filmica, *o que* exactamente da realidade é reproduzível? Como podemos em diante chamar a alguma coisa uma reprodução, quando sendo uma re-apresentação escapa à representação e é contudo diferente de um duplo? Diversos termos e conceitos devem ser esclarecidos e tornam necessária a construção de um sistema.

A proposta desta dissertação consiste pois no desenvolvimento de uma ontologia específica do cinema intitulada "sistema solarístico". O neologismo designa uma proposta de desenvolvimento de uma tecno-ontologia do cinema, que se apropria de ideias estéticas e princípios de pensamento presentes no filme de ficção científica "Solaris" de Andrei Tarkovsky (1972). Escolhemos este filme como sintomático da auto-reflexividade do *medium* e da sua complexa correlação com a realidade, tecnologicamente condicionada. A nossa proposta é analisar, aprofundar e desenvolver as interrogações levantadas pelo cinema sobre a natureza da realidade, e, gradualmente, apresentar o sistema solarístico. O termo "solarístico" é deduzido da "ciência solarística", uma ciência fictícia introduzida pela diegese do filme e, de certo modo, expandida pela nossa análise. Esta ciência dedica-se à investigação do planeta Solaris¹, um desafio inatingível

¹ O filme "Solaris" difere do planeta fictício Solaris, que dá nome ao filme. Assim distinguimos o primeiro do segundo usando aspas quando nos referimos ao filme e retirando-as quando queremos mencionar o planeta.

para o conhecimento humano. No filme, o planeta é remanescente de um aparato comparável ao cinematógrafo enquanto aparelho orgânico: suspeita-se que seja um cérebro gigante que (re)produz fragmentos da realidade sob a forma de objectos e de seres. Assim, a apreensão do filme "Solaris" baseia-se na sua extraordinária auto-reflexividade do meio fílmico, num duplo sentido.

Primeiramente, "Solaris" é auto-reflexivo porquanto reflecte sobre o *status* ontológico e epistemológico do filme apenas como qualquer outro filme o faz: representa a análise das características essenciais do cinema, um *medium*, que desde o seu aparecimento sempre levantou discussões sobre questões ontológicas e epistemológicas. No entanto, o "sistema solarístico" procura acrescentar a esta reflexão um aspecto novo: é nossa intenção trabalhar a essência do cinema através da análise próxima e detalhada de um filme específico; além disso, argumentamos que essa análise acrescenta novas ideias filosóficas sobre a própria natureza da realidade.

Isso leva-nos ao segundo aspecto da auto-reflexividade de "Solaris" enquanto filme específico. Os seus princípios estéticos, a *mise-en-scène*, a dramaturgia e a narrativa funcionam como uma alegoria das várias tentativas de apreensão humana do real da realidade e do confronto com a sua reprodução por intervenção não-humana. Para prever duas exemplificações: "Solaris" mantém como princípio ontológico uma condição a que poderíamos chamar 'ser sem ser'. Este conceito alude ao princípio de 'presença da ausência', frequentemente referido como uma das principais proposições do cinema sobre a sua misteriosa essência ontológica, oriunda da fotografia. Além disso, o planeta Solaris é remanescente de um aparato comparável ao cinematógrafo, apesar de ser um aparelho orgânico: Solaris é um reproduzidor de seres que parecem humanos, mas que, tal como as fotografias ou as personagens fílmicas, são estranhos no seu estatuto quer ótico quer ontológico.

A primeira parte da dissertação "A Emergência do Sistema Solarístico" funciona como introdução. Depois de algumas interrogações preliminares, a ideia do sistema solarístico é brevemente afluída e são delineados alguns pensamentos necessários para justificar a sua emergência e os seus

métodos, tal como o desafio ontológico da reprodução fotográfica da realidade e a auto-reflexividade deste tema no filme "Solaris", que se afirma como especialmente apto para o desenvolvimento de uma filosofia solarística. Entre outros filósofos Martin Heidegger é apresentado como uma das mais importantes referências para apoiar uma análise do estatuto ontológico da reprodução da realidade quando interrogamos a natureza fundamental do cinema. Uma vez que Heidegger reflecte sobre a presença e a ausência do ser, o seu trabalho sobrepõe-se conceptualmente com algumas das mais cruciais questões levantadas pelo surgimento do cinema: o que podemos dizer sobre o *ser do cinema*?

Além disso, oferece-se uma descrição detalhada do *plot* e da *mise-en-scène* do filme "Solaris" para dar ao leitor a oportunidade de mergulhar na densidade do filme sem o ver. Adicionalmente, uma breve história da filosofia do cinema permite-nos introduzir as principais posições que justificam o surgimento do sistema solarístico. Apontando a relevância para esta análise de anteriores posturas na filosofia do cinema, esboçamos então quer a posição de "Solaris" enquanto peça filosófica, quer as suas principais interrogações filosóficas.

Gilles Deleuze e Stanley Cavell são aqui escolhidos como os dois principais filósofos na introdução da reflexão sobre o cinema no seu âmbito filosófico. Ambos ainda hoje dominam as principais correntes da filosofia do cinema. Apesar de serem referências incontornáveis, o sistema solarístico é uma tentativa de ir além dos projectos destes dois filósofos que integram as questões levantadas pelo cinema na sua respectiva corrente teórica.

Na segunda parte da análise, intitulada "Enredos Solarísticos", são delineados os primeiros passos de aproximação ao sistema solarístico, bem como o subjacente entendimento da realidade e da sua reprodução no cinema. Assim são gradualmente apresentadas três distintas mas correlacionadas definições de cinema, que fundamentalmente caracterizam a relação intrincada entre cinema e realidade.

Estas definições são primeiramente a do cinema como catalisador de um modelo múltiplo de realidade, seguidamente a do cinema como dispositivo não humano (um aparato tecnológico) que convoca uma mudança

epistemológica, e, por fim, a do cinema como uma reprodução automática do ser e do real da realidade. São aqui introduzidos também alguns dos conceitos mais essenciais para o âmbito da nossa análise, tais como o de "real da realidade" ou o de "ser da realidade", e interpeladas as questões da sua reprodução no cinema.

A terceira parte desta análise, intitulada “Implicações Solarísticas”, consiste em rematar alguns aspectos elaborados até aqui, considerando agora ramificações e especificações, bem como uma imersão mais profunda no sistema de pensamento de Heidegger. Numa apropriação da teoria da morte e do pensamento-projecto (*Entwurfsdenken*) heideggerianos, é desvelada então uma dimensão *post-mortem* do cinema (no sentido de sobrevivência das entidades reproduzidas).

É aqui ainda analisado o conceito do Nada de Heidegger. O seu subjacente conceito de aniquilação (*'Nichtung'* em Alemão), o nada em acção, é comparado com o Real lacaniano e com a ideia do vazio no pensamento de Alain Badiou. Acresce, a *ontologia quântica*² de Karen Barad, especialmente o seu conceito de “enredamento intra-activo”³, que evoca um agenciamento do “dispositivo”⁴, que pode ser analisado na sua aplicação ao planeta Solaris no filme. É pois nossa intenção mostrar como os princípios de pensamento, presentes em “Solaris” e em Heidegger, Barad, Badiou e outros, convergem na expansão do entendimento ontológico do ser e como estes podem ser aplicados a um pensamento sobre a realidade e o cinema; sendo que este último traz uma nova condição tecno-ontológica que implica uma mudança radical para o pensamento humano. Esta mudança é comparada ao pensamento de Barad que argumenta a favor de uma nova causalidade, que ultrapassa o representacionalismo, e combate o dualismo que divide matéria e significado.

² A ontologia quântica de Barad baseia-se na física quântica de Niels Bohrs.

³ O termo “enredamento intra-activo” (“intra-active entanglements”) foi cunhado por Karen Barad em *Meeting the Universe Halfway* e designa uma relação inter-activa entre objectos que precede e chega até a causar a sua existência.

⁴ O conceito de “apparatus” de Barad é desenvolvido a partir do termo “dispositivo” de Foucault (em francês “dispositif”) e aplicado no nosso contexto, mas também num sentido técnico como o utilizado por Walter Benjamin (“Apparatur”).

Continuando o resumo: para complementar Heidegger, é considerada a “object oriented ontology” de Graham Harman, bem como alguns aspectos da leitura especulativa de Slavoj Žižek do ‘Real’ lacaniano e o radical passo de Badiou de acrescentar à ontologia a teoria dos conjuntos da matemática (Georg Cantor). A nossa abordagem de Badiou foca-se na sua análise do ser enquanto múltiplo, o que é um dos aspectos do ser-no-cinema e do ser-em-Solaris (planeta). A ideia de imagem – subjacente à nossa análise - é também vista numa dimensão própria, pois não pertence nem à mente, nem à matéria. A ideia de Heidegger de evento sustenta inesperadamente a nossa abordagem da *imagem real enquanto evento*.

Finalmente, a quarta parte, a que chamámos "Conclusões Solarísticas - as Ligações do Sistema Solarístico", conclui a presente análise revelando uma estrutura quadriplicada do sistema solarístico (sob a forma de um catálogo de 45 teses), uma revelação que não deixa de acrescentar alguns novos aspectos – baseados na tardia ideia de quádruplo [*Geviert*] de Heidegger e na apropriação desta última assumida por Harman.



THE SOLARISTIC SYSTEM

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For my parents (*in memoriam*)
so that we can meet on Solaris

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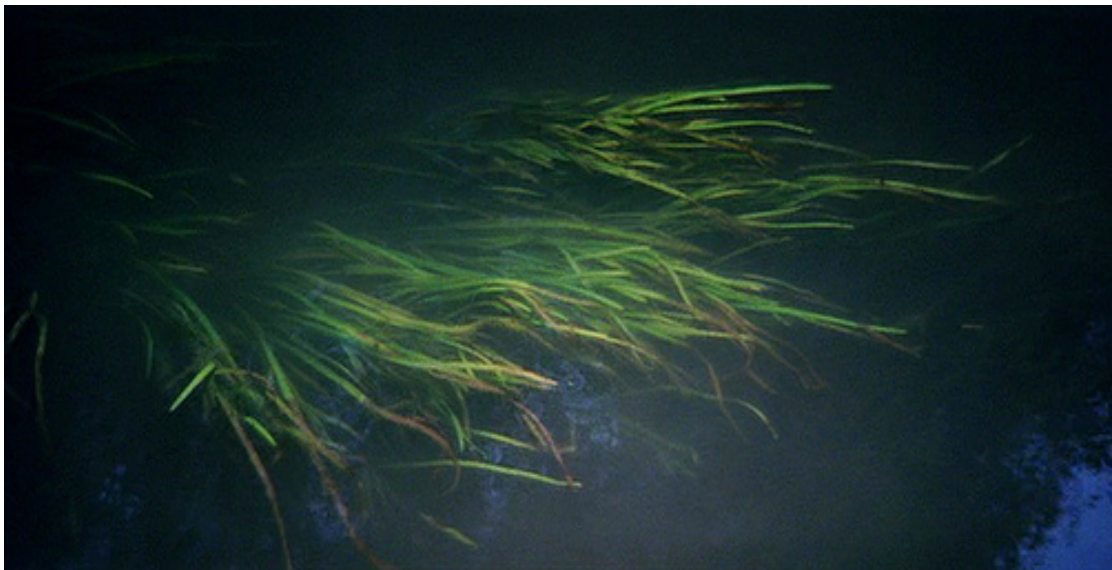
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PART 1

THE EMERGENCE OF THE SOLARISTIC

SYSTEM



I.

PRELIMINARY INTERROGATIONS

The question of mechanical reproduction of reality is one of the very philosophical questions raised by the emergence of film at the end of the XIXth Century, inquiring into the ontological nature of both reality and film. Yet the nature of this audio-photographic and moving reproduction of reality constitutes an ontological puzzle, which has been disregarded as a main topic of enquiry with direct consequences for philosophy. It is therefore my aim to reassess the over a hundred-year-old interrogation “What is cinema?” as an ontological-epistemological analysis on the nature of film and its relation with reality and the real. *What* of reality exactly is reproduced by film? In truth, this interrogation cannot be phrased without presenting a more radical, metaphysical enquiry into reality: If reality is reproducible, what then is its fundamental nature? We will see throughout how these interrogations can be analyzed or reformulated by closer examination.

The filmic reproduction of reality constitutes a kind of ontological aporia, which so far has been insufficiently taken into account. It is prevalingly argued that the reflection on perception would include the reflection on film, as we perceive the world already as one. Such a claim ignores the ontological difference between the “natural” image and the apparatus-based image of reality. It is furthermore a contradictory meta-position: if we compare natural perception to film we have firstly to define what film is and the way it is perceived. The *world as film* is a modern standpoint originated by the

reflection on film and has influenced the way in which we relate to reality.

The claim has been anticipated by Henri Bergson, and firstly formulated by Gilles Deleuze⁵. Therefore, it is not the case, that the reflection on the sensory perception of reality has to be applied to film, but that the reflection on film can add something new to the reflection on the perception of reality. I will argue throughout that in cinema and film we are facing the images made by a technological apparatus, which do not integrate with but *penetrate into* that which has been natural human perception. This apparatus is selecting, recording and shaping a web of reproduced and assembled reality, producing reality thereby. By watching this tissue of reality, we are not submitted to an illusory appearance like in Plato's Allegory of the Cave, but, as Alain Badiou suggests, we even learn something new about the real: "Cinema is a new relationship to the Real itself. (...) It is the absence of the Real but as a new form of knowledge."⁶

Thereby Badiou adds to our ontological as well as metaphysical question yet an epistemological level: What could this new form of knowledge of "the Real" be? How can we learn something about that which is absent? Is it further a property of this real to be reproducible? And how at all can we claim to reproduce that, which withdraws from intelligibility? Since reality changes its quality by filmic reproduction, what exactly of reality is reproducible, and is this something of reality the 'real of reality'?⁷ How can we then call something a reproduction, when it, being a *re*-presentation, escapes representation, yet is different from a double? Many terms and concepts need to be elucidated; a system needs to be built.

Let me briefly reinforce the necessity of my approach by the attempt of arguing against the hypothesis that there is a difficulty of grasping that which

⁵ "(I)t is the universe as cinema in itself, a metacinema." Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I – The Movement-Image*, p. 59

⁶ Alain Badiou, *Cinema and Philosophy*, keynote lecture given on 27th of November 2014 at UNSW Arts & Social Sciences, Australia

⁷ The "real of reality" is a central term of this analysis, which will be developed throughout and may even function as a placeholder for ontological truth, to be distinguished from the absolute truth of metaphysics.

film reproduces. Firstly, one may say that film obviously reproduces time and space. Yet this answer is incomplete and only partly correct; along with the grasp of reality it evokes another problem involving perception: since the era of Aristotle the negativity of time, as well as its reciprocity to space, constitutes a philosophical puzzle of its own, raising the concept of space-time. Of course, filmic reproduction cannot be separated from space-time, just like physical reality and sensory perception cannot. This inseparability relies on an idea of space-time disclosing reality's continuity, whether in film, or beyond film. Yet this continuity of reality is beyond the possibility of a sustained explanation: why is time a flow? How does one moment reach the next one, if both are too small to be grasped? Asking after the nature of time can help us to inquire more precisely into reproduction: *what of reality is exactly transported by space-time that continuously is and becomes reproducible by film?*

Another argument for neglecting the approach of seeking a real of reality in film could be that film reproduces *moving images of reality*. But this answer merely displaces the problem into another area, equally problematic, without breaking the circle: what exactly is an *image of reality* in movement? And what is an image? Isn't it exactly that which bears and carries the *real of reality*? That will be one of the major questions of this analysis, to be gradually approached. Henri Bergson, one of the first philosophers to evoke cinema and photography in the realm of epistemology, claims that the universe is an aggregate of images and that images are equal to matter, in constant movement of becoming. Yet if image is equal to matter, can we have an image without matter? Or is the film-image just the machinic perception of this image, detached from its preceptor, but not to be called an image in itself?

In the wake of these questions the *material quality* of the filmic reproduced becomes thus the next issue: an image is linked to visibility and light. Yet counter to Bergson's claim, common sense grasps light as different from matter: it grasps light as a quality which turns space visible, like a light ubiquitous tissue wrapping matter. From the point of view of this analysis, based on Bergson, light bears space, because light bears image, which implies space, as it is equal to matter. Thereby the image is only one possible

property of light, the visible light, an event out of a rupture or accident. Most of the light is *invisible* and therefore implies an infinity of possible or virtual images, which are not yet visible and may never become visible. Visibility is only achieved by light when it hits matter and is perceived from a certain point of view: any point in matter allows an infinity of possible images, as multiple as reality. I will argue throughout that the photographic and then (even more complicated) the filmic image disclose this virtual character of an infinitely multiple reality.

At any rate, it should be sufficiently clear by now that the *understanding of reality and of the concept of the real* is conditioning the proposed approach; its complexity will be fulfilled and will project corpus and meaning within the scope of analysis.

II.

THE PROPOSAL OF THE SOLARISTIC SYSTEM

Regarding the preliminary interrogations and topics raised for analysis, my proposition consists in the development of a specific ontology of film entitled 'the solaristic system'. The neologism designates the proposal to develop a techno-ontology of film, which appropriates the aesthetic ideas and principles of thought present in the 1972 sci-fi movie "Solaris" by Andrei Tarkovsky. I have chosen this film as symptomatic for the medium's philosophical self-reflexivity and its intriguing correlation with reality. I thereby define film as an apparatus based audio-visual reproduction of reality, technologically conditioned. It is my ambition to analyze, deepen and develop the raised inquiries on the nature of film, and in conclusion to present the solaristic system, to be gradually introduced. The word "solaristic" is deduced from the term "solaristic science", a fictitious science introduced in the movie's diegesis. It is dedicated to the investigation of the planet Solaris⁸, an unattainable challenge for human knowledge. In the film, the planet is reminiscent of an apparatus comparable to the cinematograph, as an organic device: It is suspected to be a giant brain, which (re)produces fragments of reality in the form of objects and beings. Therefore the apprehension of the movie "Solaris" is based on its outstanding self-reflexivity of the filmic medium, in a double sense.

⁸ The film "Solaris" differs from the fictive planet Solaris, which gives the film its name. Therefore I distinguish the one from the other by using quotation marks when referring to the movie, and no quotation marks when referring to the planet.

Firstly, “Solaris” is self-reflexive insofar as it reflects on the ontological and epistemological status of film *just as any other movie*: It represents the analysis of the essential features of film, a medium, which has raised discussion as to its ontological and epistemological conditions ever since its emergence. The ‘solaristic system’ attempts to give this reflection a new shift. It is closely working on the essence of film by analyzing one specific film, within the delineated context. It is further claiming that this analysis leads us to new philosophical insight on the very nature of reality.

This brings us to the second aspect of the self-reflexivity of “Solaris” as a specific movie. Its aesthetic principles, *mise-en-scène*, dramaturgy and storytelling work as an allegory for the various attempts of human apprehension of the real of reality and the confrontation with its reproduction by non-human intervention. To preview two exemplifications: “Solaris” holds as a main aesthetic principle a status we shall call ‘being without being’. This concept reminds us of the principle of ‘presence of absence’, often referred to as one of the main principles of film regarding its puzzling ontological essence, originating in photography⁹. Furthermore, the planet itself is reminiscent of an apparatus comparable to the cinematograph, although it is not a technological device: Solaris is the reproducer of beings who resemble humans, but are puzzling in their ontic as well as ontological status, similar to photographs or film characters.

Let me briefly introduce the storyline of the movie. The main character, psychologist Kris Kelvin, is sent to a decaying space station at the orbit of the planet Solaris, because disturbing reports have arrived from the three scientists remaining there. In the center of the film are the so-called “visitors”. As far as it can be understood, the visitors are both key to and mirror of the characters’ identities and consciences. Like ghosts they simply appear out of nowhere, explained as “the stabilization of neutrinos”. They are immortal and attached in their identity to the humans. They are the somehow transformed

⁹ In the context of philosophy of film Stanley Cavell famously claims on the photographic image: “We do not know what a photograph is; we do not know how to place it ontologically.” (Cf. Stanley Cavell, *The World Viewed*, pp. 17-18) Cavell regards the photographic image as the basis of the filmic image, and applies the ontological feature of one to the other.

energy of human emotional needs and thought processing, a kind of communicative interface between humans, their desires and the planet, who is a transformer. Actually *Solaris* seems to investigate the humans, proposing, in a way, a form to meet each other. Presence thereby plays a central role. The visitors somehow reflect the essence of human nature in their way of being, and are driven by the question that the humans are looking for: to know who or what they really are. This search is crucial for the film.

By what has been said until now, I would like to propose the solaristic philosophy as a complement to or deduction from the preexisting framework of philosophy of film. As such, solaristic philosophy is neither set as a philosophical interpretation of film, nor as an exemplification of philosophy through film; it aspires instead to new insights and consequences for both, the ontological thinking of film and on reality. The solaristic system further reassesses some of the main scopes of film theory such as Walter Benjamin's assembled "permeation of reality", André Bazin's "myth of total cinema" or the Bergsonian-Deleuzian "universe as meta-cinema". It inquires into the features of the ontological essence of film, proposing concepts such as the solaristic *cine-thinking*, *cine-real* and *cine-being*, the first evoking Gilles Deleuze, the second evoking André Bazin, the latter evoking the most important philosopher of the modern reflection on being, Martin Heidegger, who has radically reformulated the question about being.

In order to be able to inquire into these interrogations I will try to briefly delineate what is the intention behind the solaristic philosophy of film. Some parts of the thesis function as a ground to sustain the *appropriation* of the movie and its fictitious principles as an expansion to the philosophical questions I have introduced so far. In a certain way, I seek hereby the idea to set philosophy as a form of art. The *solaristic system* might be understood as an artistic approach, a form of conceptual art, just in the sense as Graham Harman mentions:

For centuries, philosophy has aspired to the conditions of a rigorous science, allying itself at various times with mathematics or descriptive psychology. Yet

what if the counter-project of the next four centuries were to turn philosophy into an art?¹⁰

Stemming from a sustained analysis of the movie “Solaris”, its narrative and its principles of thought, the solaristic system establishes a set of key epistemic notions, which establish the cinematographic image as a reproduction of reality in movement. This reproduction is based on certain, photographic apparatus-technologies, and capture one actual being of reality. On one level the thesis attempts an analysis of the underlying concepts and roots, which have led to the development of the solaristic system.

A special role therein is played by the Heideggerian interpretation of being, referring to the ancient Greeks, for whom "entities are grasped in their Being as 'presence'; this means that they are understood with regard to a definite mode of time – the 'Present; that is they are conceived as presence.'"¹¹ This being present means being close, lying-before-us¹²: “To be present is to come close by (*an-wesen*), to be here in contrast and conflict with to be away (*ab-wesen*).”¹³ Yet Heidegger still distinguishes *another kind* of presence, much more important: the “presence of what is present.”¹⁴ This “presence itself”¹⁵ is a concept, which Harman developed further by referring to withdrawing real objects (“the third table”¹⁶). According to Heidegger the “presence itself” always remains: “Presence itself is precisely the presence of what is present, and remains so even if we specifically stress its various traits.”¹⁷

Actually, and as Harman underlines, “*being is time*”¹⁸ for Heidegger, but time is not reduced to the present of the presence: “It would be a mistake (...)

¹⁰ Graham Harman, “The Third Table - Notebook 85” in: *100 Notes – 100 Thoughts*, pp. 14-15

¹¹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §6, p. 48

¹² Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, p. 236

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 236

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 235

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 237

¹⁶ Graham Harman, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ Martin Heidegger, *op. cit.*, p. 237

¹⁸ Graham Harman, *Heidegger Explained: From Phenomenon to Thing*, p. 1

for us to take the view that Being of beings meant merely, for all time, the presence of what is present.”¹⁹ Heidegger actually claims that time consists in the unity of three ecstases, the past, the present and the future²⁰. Therefore, even in the present, the two other ecstasies remain, although absent, a presence of absence, as Heidegger argues: “also this not-present-any-more is immediately present in its absence [*west in seinem Abwesen unmittelbar an*]”²¹. This kind of presence rhymes with the presence of the visitors on Solaris and evokes one of the most important characteristics of film and photography in general: the presence of absence, which Stanley Cavell describes.

The photographic image precisely evokes that which is not present or there *now*, our displacement in space and time, which in film appears in form of a photographic, displaced time-flow. It has no physical, yet a sensible presence. This characteristic is simultaneously the main principle of the movie Solaris, embodied by the visitors, as if a realization of the absent. Their physical tactility is a contingent artifice.

On a second level, and organically interweaved with the first one, I will outline the solaristic system itself, introduce a network of names and explanations deriving from the ontological, aesthetic and narrative principles present in the movie. To give an example, the characters of the movie will function not only as archetypes and *dramatis personae*, but also as *conceptual personae*²²; their inner and outer conflicts process the solaristic key-notions, catalyzing their meanings and allude to the Heideggerian Dasein. Furthermore, the planet Solaris itself is to be understood as an intra-active apparatus or processor of the real.

Yet fundamental to the development of the solaristic system is the ontological nature of film itself and its relation with reality and the real. The

¹⁹ Martin Heidegger, *op.cit.*, p. 235

²⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 377

²¹ Martin Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*, p. 13

²² Deleuze and Guattari introduce the idea of “conceptual personae” who convey movement of thought in philosophy: “The conceptual persona is the becoming or the subject of a philosophy (...)” (Cf. Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 63)

film-image becomes literally a material and transcendent event in “Solaris”, something Dasein enters and exits. Where are we in this movie – in film, at the cinema or on Solaris? Has Dasein doubled or tripled, or are we out of the world?

III.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

A certain current of film theory has stressed the origin of film in photography. André Bazin, one of its main defenders, claims about the photographic image: “the photographic image is the object itself, (...) it shares, by virtue of the very process of its becoming, the being of the model of which it is the reproduction; it *is* the model.”²³ This famous quote of Bazin is often interpreted in two ways: firstly as if reproduction would give the model an *indexical reference* or, secondly, as if reproduction would be an *entity identical* to its model, which would be a logical contradiction to be rejected. Within this treatise I will argue that both readings are not correct. Bazin’s claim “the photographic image *is* the model” goes in my interpretation of the French original beyond the indexical reading frequently established in anglophone film theory.

Bazin further mentions a “transference of reality from the thing to its reproduction”²⁴ and somehow presupposes, without reflecting on it, an *equalization of being and reality*, two different terms, which usually are distinguished in the sense of incorporating different meanings. The traditional distinction of ‘being’ and ‘reality’ is reflected in the history of philosophy by the division between ontology and metaphysics, between the inquiry into being and about the fundamental nature of reality. Yet both terms are

²³ André Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, p. 14

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14

equiprimordially²⁵ entangled: reality is conceptually to be grasped as that kind of uniting totality in which being(s) unfold(s) and incorporates a more abstract level, whereas being is determining the more concrete characteristics of existing entities: for example, the being of a fish, a stone, a human being. There is no being without reality, and no reality without being. Being is inscribed into reality, yet reality is distinct from being, something *larger* than being, enfolding being. Although reality is composed by infinitely many being entities, it is also not the sum of beings, further not their being as such: the word reality refers to something else, which makes the being entities real, and which I propose to set as a kind of unknown variable for now.

Often reality designates “the world” *in which* the entities *are*, just as Martin Heidegger describes it: *being-in* is the way in which being is, it always is a *being-in-the-world*²⁶. Furthermore, the being of entities can be illusory, not real, whereas reality is always a part of the real. Can there be a pure being without reality? Is there at all such thing as “reality”? The labyrinth of questions coming up shows how we have to work carefully and try to define each of the terms, reality and being, before using composite terms like ‘the reality of being’ or ‘the being of reality’. This dissertation attempts to deal with this chain of questions.

As we will see in closer examination, Bazin states that “to *be* the model” is something which can be *shared* by transfer of reality. This makes the *being* of the depicted object an entity which is transferable by reality, and vice versa, reality becomes transportable by being. This is then what the reproduction of reality means and even discloses. When I propose to unite being and reality (inspired by Bazin) composing the neologism ‘*being of reality*’, I want to stress that being, although relying on it, differs from reality: not reality is reproduced by film, but the *being* of reality.

²⁵ ‘Equiprimordial’ is first used in 1960 by John Macquarrie who has translated with this word Heidegger’s neologism “gleichursprünglich” in *Being and Time*. It means something existing since the beginning together, equally fundamental, conditioning each other.

²⁶ “‘Being-in’ is (...) the formal existential expression for the Being of Dasein, which has Being-in-the-world as its essential state.” (Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 80)

The idea of the reproducibility of this being grounds the heart of the solaristic system and has given me reason to choose Heidegger as one of the central philosophical references in this dissertation: Heidegger has re-introduced the question about being into modern philosophy. The solaristic system concerns this puzzling condition of film: we look at something indissociable from the model it refers to. Film is not representational, but, as Cavell, the American pioneer of philosophy of film claims, *presentational*, a characteristic which causes confusion:

“A photograph does not present us with “likeness” of things; it presents us, we want to say, with the things themselves. But wanting to say that may well make us ontologically restless. (...) We do not know what a photograph is; we do not know how to place it ontologically.”²⁷

Cavell thereby seems to ignore that the puzzling question already lies in the *ontological condition of being itself*: we do not know what being is nor “how to place it ontologically”, and that is why, I argue, we do not know what the photographic reproduction of being is. On the other hand, what comes up by this specific reflection on the ontological nature of the photographic image or better, the object it depicts, is the following: *to be reproducible is a quality of the being of reality*. Therefore the connection between the photograph and the object lies in Bazin’s approach to describe the photographic image as a “transference of reality from the thing to its reproduction”²⁸.

I propose to ask, in a Heideggerian way, for the *being* of objects in film and in the world (reality, although distinct from “nature”) and furthermore, building on Heidegger and his complex conception of “presence of what is present”²⁹, to ask for the ‘*real of reality*’ (and the ‘reality of the real’), which is shared by beings and can be transferred into the photograph: a kind of essence of reality, which makes the being of the photograph real – it is not fictitious and it is not an illusion. Even if it was not the first intention of

²⁷ Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18

²⁸ André Bazin, *op. cit.*, p. 14

²⁹ Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, p. 237

disclosure for Bazin, “to *be* the model”³⁰ is referred to as something which can be shared by transfer of reality. This being will be compared to the Heideggerian *presence of what is present*.

I further propose to compare this being with the Bergsonian concept of image. What an image exactly is matters in a special way for film, as it is the image of the ‘being of reality’ of the depicted object we are facing through photographic reproduction in motion. Or, as Cavell points it famously: “a painting is a world; a photograph is of the world”³¹. In summary, I will argue that the conclusions about the nature of filmic reproduction are to be sought in the area of the ‘*being of reality*’. It is this *being* of reality, a pure being out of time and space, which becomes reproducible in film, and this being transports the *real of reality*.

It is further my intention to explore a post-mortem dimension of cinema (in the sense of surviving the reproduced entities) by appropriating Heidegger’s theory of death and his thought on projection (*Entwurfsdenken*). Thereby Heidegger’s concept of the nothing will be analyzed. His concept of nihilation (‘*Nichtung*’ in German), the nothing in action, will be compared to the Lacanian Real and to the void in Badiou’s thought. Furthermore, Karen Barad’s *quantum ontology*, especially her concept of intra-active entanglement³², calls for an apparatus-based agentialism, which can be analyzed by its metaphorical application to the planet Solaris in the movie. It is thereby my aim to show how the principles of thought present in “Solaris” and the ones of Heidegger, Barad, Badiou and others converge, expanding an ontological understanding of *being* - in reality and in film; the latter is providing a new techno-ontological condition which means a shift for human thought. This shift will be compared to Barad’s claims regarding a new causality which overcomes representationalism by arguing against the division between matter and meaning.

³⁰ André Bazin, *op. cit.*, p. 14

³¹ Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.*, p. 24

³² The term “intra-active entanglements” has been coined by Karen Barad in *Meeting the Universe Halfway* and designates an interactive relation between objects, which precedes and even causes their existence. Its detailed meaning will be further introduced.

To continue the preview: to complement Heidegger, Graham Harman's object oriented ontology is to be taken into consideration, as well as aspects of Slavoj Žižek's speculative reading of the Lacanian 'Real' and Badiou's move, introducing mathematic set theory into ontology. The main approach to Badiou focuses on reality as multiple being, which is one aspect of being-in-film and being-on-Solaris (the planet). The underlying idea of image is regarded as a dimension of its own – it does not belong nor to the mind, nor to matter. Heidegger's idea of event will unexpectedly sustain our approach of the *real image as event*.

To resume this chain of philosophical references to build on, the most important aspect to build the solaristic system on has to be mentioned: an intrinsic relation of film and philosophy. Cavell explicitly argues: "Film is made for philosophy," he says, "it shifts or puts different light on whatever philosophy has said about appearance and reality, about actors and characters, about skepticism and dogmatism, about presence and absence."³³ This position evokes and complements a further one, formulated decades earlier by Jean Epstein, who argues that film will raise a new philosophy, naming other topics as a basis for this philosophy of film:

Animated images bring out the components of a general representation of the universe, which tends to modify thought as a whole in various ways. Hence, very old, perennial problems – antagonisms between matter and mind, continuity and discontinuity, movement and stasis, or the nature of space and time, and the existence and inexistence of any reality – come into view under a brand new light. A philosophy may then emerge from this play of light and shadow (...).³⁴

There is then a link between philosophy and film which is so deeply embedded in film, that film not only changes the way we philosophically deal with reality, but also, as Epstein and Cavell independently from one another claim, albeit in different terms, film may be ultimately linked to the complex

³³ Stanley Cavell, *Reflections on a Life of Philosophy: An Interview with Stanley Cavell*, p. 19

³⁴ Jean Epstein, *The Intelligence of a Machine*, p. xi

plane of reality, in terms of reproduction. I therefore propose to make a list of these pairs of terms on which film would change thought and even philosophy, fusing the positions of Epstein and Cavell:

1. appearance and reality
2. presence and absence
3. actors and characters
4. matter and mind
5. continuity and discontinuity
6. movement and stasis
7. nature of space and time
8. the existence and non-existence of any reality

By what we have been referring until now, I would further add to that list:

9. being and nothing
10. life and death
11. image and reality
12. subject and object
13. world and thought

Thereby I have left out the pair “skepticism and dogmatism” because in my consideration it seems too much linked to Cavell’s specific project of philosophy. The addition of the points 9. to 13. will be further elucidated throughout; in a certain way they are domains, which naturally become an issue when one reflects on what is mentioned in 1. to 8. In the conclusions I will explicitly pick up these pairs of antagonisms to lay out the fourfold structure of the solaristic system in a summarized way.

IV.

SOME REMARKS ON THE TERMINOLOGY

Before exposing the detailed structure of this analysis chapter by chapter, I propose to give some further remarks clarifying the most important terminology I am using throughout. First of all, to consider the term ontology and its use throughout: what is ontology in general and what is it in our specific context, the proposal to develop an ontology of film? Ontology is generally understood as a branch of philosophy concerned with the fundamental nature of being of everything that may exist. An ontology of film proposes then to analyze the specific nature of film's being; but such an analysis cannot be separated from the challenge of dealing with reality: the being of film is also of, dependent on and entangled with that which is called 'reality' (I recall the 'unknown variable') – because the being of reality is that which film reproduces, its raw material. Therefore an ontology of film is always also an impossible ontology of reality with epistemological and metaphysical features: What is the being of reality - a "real of reality"? What makes the film images real if not their being? A film somehow is a metaphysical unity, in which each filmic frame reproduces the same metaphysical domain called reality, whether we define it as fluid and multiple or not. Furthermore, with the extended proposal of the solaristic system being a "techno-ontology" I want to call attention for the extension of ontological condition, which is a techno-

ontological one when it comes to cinema and film: the consciousness of a *technological apparatus* is reproduced.

Secondly, we need to define and distinguish the terms “film” and “cinema”. Gilbert Cohen-Séat pioneered in the 1940ies with an early distinction between a *filmic* and a *cinematic fact*:

The filmic fact consists of the expression of life (the life of the world, the spirit, the imagination, of beings and things), through a system of combined images (visual – natural or conventional – and auditory – sounds and words). The cinematic fact, instead, consists of social circulation of sensations, ideas, feelings, and materials that come from life itself and that cinema shapes according to its desires.³⁵

It is according to this definition of filmic and cinematic fact, that I will use the word film or cinema throughout this thesis, although with some slight modifications: With “film” I mean any kind of audiovisual reproduction of being and of reality in general, whether structured in cinematic form or not, whether recorded digitally, by video or on celluloid. The singular form of film is “a film”, which designates one specific single piece of audiovisual reproduction to be described in its unique characteristics. With “cinema” I mean the kind of audiovisual reproduction of reality, which is structured through certain characteristics like storytelling, affection, dramaturgy, *mise-en-scène*, whether fictional or not. Cinema is the general term, of which “movie” is the single form: one piece of audiovisual reproduction of reality structured through certain characteristics like storytelling, affection, dramaturgy, *mise-en-scène*, whether fictional or not. Anyway, I regard movies as representatives for film since they present the general audiovisual features, which define film.

The term “philosophy of film” has become established in substitution of “philosophy of cinema”: film embodies both cinema and other forms of audiovisual reproduction. This distinctive terminology is of contemporary relevance, as cinema has become expanded first through video in the 1980ies

³⁵ Gilbert Cohen-Séat, *Essai sur les principes d'une philosophie du cinéma : notions fondamentales et vocabulaire de filmologie*, p.57 (translation mine – C.R.)

and later through the digital, since the new millennium in a mobile way. Therefore the most correct expression would be to speak of “technologically apparatus-based media of the real image in movement” to include all forms of technological, visual reproduction of reality. It is thereby evident for me that cinema has been the first such medium and is thus a representative for all the following technologically apparatus-based media of the real image in movement, even those, which contemporarily dominate our perception and relation to reality with much more power, as McLuhan describes: “Today after more than a century of electric technology, we have extended our central nervous system itself in a global embrace, abolishing both space and time as far as our planet is concerned.”³⁶ Cinema was the first medium to abolish natural space and time by replacing them.

³⁶ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, p. 3

V.

SUMMARY OF THE STRUCTURE

The **first part “The Emergence of the Solaristic System”** (consisting of chapters I to VII) is an introduction. After some preliminary interrogations, the idea of the solaristic system is briefly heralded and some developing thoughts necessary to justify its methods and emergence outlined, such as the ontological puzzle of apparatus-based reproduction of reality and the self-reflexivity of this theme in the movie “Solaris”, justifying it as especially apt to be the base-ground for the development of a philosophy of film to be called the solaristic system. Among other philosophers Martin Heidegger is introduced as one of the most important references to underpin this analysis concerning reality in film and its ontological nature. Since Heidegger is a philosopher reflecting on the presence and absence of being and time, his work conceptually overlaps with some of the most crucial questions raised by the emergence of film: what can we say about the being of film?

Moreover, a detailed description of the plot and mise-en-scène of the film “Solaris” is given, to give the reader the opportunity to immerse himself into the density of the movie without watching it. Additionally, a short history of philosophy of film introduces the main positions important to justify the rise of the solaristic system as a necessary step for advancing within the realm of philosophy of film. Pointing out the relevance of former positions of philosophy of film for the scope of analysis, the movie “Solaris” is justified as a piece of philosophy and its main philosophical interrogations are sketched. Gilles Deleuze and Stanley Cavell are then chosen and discussed as the two main

philosophers to have introduced the reflection about film in their own philosophical scope of approach. Cavell and Deleuze still today dominate the main currents of philosophy of film. The solaristic system is an attempt to go beyond the projects of these two philosophers.

In the **second part of analysis entitled “Solaristic Twists”** (chapters VIII to X) the first steps towards the solaristic system will be delineated, as well as the underlying understanding of reality and its reproduction in film. Thereby three different although correlated definitions of film will be gradually presented, fundamentally characterizing film’s entangled relation with reality. These are firstly, film as the catalyzer of a multifold model of reality, secondly film as a non-human tool (a technological apparatus) evoking epistemological change and thirdly film as an automatic reproduction of the real of reality. Further concepts fundamental for our scope of analysis will be introduced such as the “real of reality” and the “being of reality”, and the question of their reproduction in film will be asked.

Chapter VIII named “What Happens to Reality in Film?” proceeds on Cavell’s puzzling statement that a photographic image (which constitutes the film image) presents us “with the things themselves”³⁷ and not with any kind of similarity or representation, therefore concluding that we “do not know” how to “place a photograph” “ontologically”³⁸. Our analysis starts where Cavell refers to magic: what is the being of a photograph? Cutting back to Bazin, on whom Cavell is basing his observation, we find out that there is “transference of reality from the thing to its reproduction”³⁹, from the model to its image. Therefore Bazin concludes “the model *is* the image”⁴⁰. I will give a reading of this assumption, that reaches beyond the indexical. Although having started with a question about reality, we have now turned to a reflection on being, which in light of photographic reproduction becomes a new predicate: it can be transferred, is

³⁷ Stanley Cavell, *The World Viewed*, p. 16

³⁸ Ibid., p. 16

³⁹ André Bazin, *op. cit.*, p. 14

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 14

thus shareable and reproducible. How can being be shared and how does it so through the photographic image? Moreover, how can we even pose this question without asking about being in the first place?

By arguing so, the investigation is now compelled to look for Martin Heidegger who has reintroduced the question about being in modern philosophy, claiming that we do not know what being is. Therefore Heidegger attempts, in *Being and Time*, to consider being from Dasein's point of view, conditioned by temporality. Being becomes then a *being-towards-death*, and most importantly: *being is time* for Heidegger. "Our provisional aim is the interpretation of *time* as the possible horizon for any understanding whatsoever of Being."⁴¹ Film is often described as *time-based art* and for Tarkovsky filmmaking is best described as *sculpting in time*, as film enables the possibility to bring time back. Film is reproduced being. This kind of time-based "cine-being" is characteristic of the being in and on the planet Solaris, a being of memory images (in a Bergsonian sense), simultaneously evoking a death-driven and spectral character of film.

After having elucidated this first sense of being in film, we should come back to the term „being of reality“ which becomes reproducible in film, and ask after the term reality: how can we reflect on film and its relation to reality, if we have not clarified what *reality* is?

Therefore **chapter IX** entitled "Twisted Reality and its Reproduction" aims to develop further the concept of reality we are talking about, referring to different models of multifold reality. Although the analysis mentions the dichotomy of idealism - materialism, its main focus lies on the contemporary comeback of materialism and realism, presenting a new speculative twist concerning the knowledge of reality and the problem of human access. This new twist has hardly been explored in the context of aesthetics, and even less in the context of film. The chapter develops the idea of multifold reality, with an infinity of possible worlds. Thereby special attention is given to Henri Bergson, who can be seen as an early pioneer of speculative materialism, and who

⁴¹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 1

claims that perception corresponds to the reality of the perceived object: the world is image for Bergson, itself composed of images, which interact. Mind and matter are thereby equally real, in the sense that both are images, whereby interiority and exteriority are only relations among images. Furthermore, there are some images which are not perceived. Reality is then defined as a multitude of image(s).

In contemporary philosophy the discussion on reality and its perception has taken an ontological turn; speculative realism in particular has given the reflection on reality a new realist or materialist twist, delineating an ontological framework and considering its epistemological implications. The common aim is to overcome „correlationism“, the claim that thought cannot get outside itself, yet the positions in materialism and realism are differing from each other. Correlationism is also a position, which Bergson would have rejected, whereas Heidegger presents correlationist aspects, although a realist reading of it can be given. Graham Harman (object-oriented-ontology) and Markus Gabriel (new realism) are mentioned as examples of speculative realism, whereas Alain Badiou and Slavoj Žižek are considered transcendental materialists, together with Gilles Deleuze as a precursor. In all cases we are confronted with complex and multifold models of reality. Gabriel's theory on reality is of special relevance to our context: he postulates the existence of fields of sense, which can interact and overlap, yet rejects the unifying category of reality as such. An interesting comparison can be drawn between Gabriel's concept of field and Bergson's idea of image, and it is, in our context, worth to think about the reproduction of what we will call *fields of images*.

The reproduction of reality must then be multifold and composed of different kinds of fields. Yet is such a multifold being of reality reproducible? The answer at that state of analysis is that the different multifold areas are interconnected, we cannot separate them; for example, we cannot reproduce only physical reality. On the other hand we cannot reproduce all the fields of images at once, the whole of manifoldness. Why is that so? Similarly to Markus Gabriel, for the pioneer thinker and filmmaker Epstein reality as such

is non-existing because it consists of a “sum of unrealities”⁴², and he argues that this nature of reality (its unrealness) is disclosed by film. In that way film unveils properties of reality which otherwise would have remained withdrawn. Even recognizing the possibility of manifoldness of reality being reproduced, we have so far rather presupposed the reproduction of *reality* than actually defined the principle of *reproduction*: *what* of reality is shared and reproduced in film, which transmits manifoldness?

Chapter X, entitled “Asking for the Real of Reality” is one of the most important chapters of the thesis. It attempts to elaborate a definition of *what of* reality is being reproduced in film, proceeding from Alain Badiou’s claim “Cinema is a new relationship to the Real itself”⁴³. According to Bergson the world is image, but what is an image? And is the reproduced image we see in film the same as its original? For Bergson “interiority and exteriority are only relations among images”⁴⁴ and therefore not to be separated. As Pasolini argues the film spectator has the impression to be “right inside reality”⁴⁵ - but where are we actually when we watch a movie? What is it of reality that makes film reality be as real as reality? And how can this real of reality be transferred from life to celluloid?

This apparent *paradox of cinema and reality* is symptomatic for the fundamental nature of such a real: *the real of reality lies beyond reality’s physical side and is independent of time and space*. This would attribute to the real of reality a kind of fluid and immaterial existence: it is a characteristic of being, yet to be characterized as a *being without being* - the main feature of “Solaris” central character Harey, who is also its main conceptual persona (CP).

Cavell stands in accordance to this line of reasoning when he characterizes objects in film: He actually describes their presence as referring

⁴² Jean Epstein, *op. cit.*, p. 15

⁴³ Alain Badiou, *op. cit.*

⁴⁴ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 13

⁴⁵ Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Pasolini on Pasolini: Interviews with Oswald Stack*, p. 29

“to their absence, their location in another place.”⁴⁶ Film then is real *by negating the presence* of what is real, which again is negated. It is referring to an absence which negates its absence, as it simultaneously evokes presence – a negation of negation of the real, similar to Badiou’s claim: “It [cinema] is the absence of the Real but as a new form of knowledge.”⁴⁷ This absence recasts film as a phantasmagoric scenario of the dead ones, as on *Solaris*. CP Harey stands for cine-being and her existence permits new kind of conclusion. Death has been accessed by film. The hypothesis of *film-as-death* reassesses Heidegger’s concepts of being, time and death. *Film-as-death*, is furthermore a possibility for doubled Dasein experiencing a *being-in-death without dying*.

Also, Cavell’s idea of presence in film (which is an absence) is actually based on Heidegger. The latter actually distinguishes between being present as “lying-before-us” and “presence itself”: “Presence itself is precisely the presence of what is present.”⁴⁸ Heidegger roots presence in the Greek *parousía*, which he translates into German conveying it a sense of dwelling in time, a sense of permanence opposed to a mere presence in the present, which is neither being nor time for Heidegger. Time consists for Heidegger in the unity of three ecstases (past, present and future). Even in the present, the two other ecstases remain, although absent, as a presence of absence. He says: “this not-present-any-more is immediately present in its absence [*west in seinem Abwesen unmittelbar an*]”⁴⁹. Being as presence itself thus implicates the possibility of its own not-being-any-more. It is the presence of CP Harey, which *is not* anymore, evoking a *transcendental materiality* of film. This evokes transcendental materialism, of which Badiou is to be considered a pioneer.

Two central concepts of Badiou’s thought are then analyzed as being important to our context: the ontology of multiplicity and the void of Lacan’s

⁴⁶ Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.*, p. xvi

⁴⁷ Alain Badiou, *op. cit.*

⁴⁸ Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, p. 237

⁴⁹ Martin Heidegger (translation mine – C.R.), *Zur Sache des Denkens*, p. 13

concept of the Real. Does it make sense that this Real in film is becoming a transcending real of reproduction?

In *Being and Event* Badiou fuses the set theory of mathematician Georg Cantor with Heideggerian ontology. Following Cantor, Being is for Badiou not 'one' and also not 'one multiple'⁵⁰ because 'one' simply is not. Instead Being is *infinite multiplicity* for Badiou, an idea grounded in Cantor's set theory where *absolutely infinite multiplicity* is designated as *inconsistent*⁵¹. This inconsistency refers to a pure *non-being* and represents the idea of the unthinkable, therefore Badiou names it "the void"⁵². Transferring this concept to the solaristic system, CP Harey is then the embodiment of *being as a void*. Grounded in Cantor, thinking the Real for Badiou presents a way to think the impossible⁵³ and film may be one possible tool for thinking such an "impossible Real" in terms of its of reproduction. Badiou further grounds his concept of the Real in Lacan, who designates the Real as „that which resists symbolization absolutely“ and which is a void because "it is the world of words that creates the world of things"⁵⁴. The concept of the void establishes thus an equalization between being and "the Real". Now it does not seem a paradox anymore, that the real of reality or the being of reality is conveyed by the "transference of reality"⁵⁵ in film, as mentioned by Bazin.

The Lacanian idea maintained by Badiou – that of setting the Real inside the subject – indicates one more reason why film is so especially suitable for this inquiry into being and reality: *film is the pure being of*

⁵⁰ "(B)eing is neither one (because only presentation itself is pertinent to the count-as-one), nor multiple (because the multiple is *solely* the regime of presentation)." Ibid., p. 24

⁵¹ Badiou quotes Cantor: "On the one hand, a multiplicity may be such that the affirmation according to which *all* its elements 'are together' leads to a contradiction, such that it is impossible to conceive the multiplicity as a unity, as a 'finite thing'. These multiplicities, I name them *absolutely infinite multiplicities*, or *inconsistent*." (Ibid., pp. 41-42)

⁵² Ibid., p. 52

⁵³ "I think that the impossible is precisely the name of the Real. " *Alain Badiou, The Critique of Critique: Critical Theory as a New Access to the Real*, (available online)

⁵⁴ Jacques Lacan, "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis", in: *Écrits: A Selection*, p. 65

⁵⁵ Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, p. 14

subjectivity (which is a void), yet in objectified form: it is recorded and reproducible; its material quality discloses an immateriality under very specific conditions of projection. Adrian Johnston claims that there is a “more-than-materiality negativity”, which transposed to our context fits not only the being in film but also the visitors on Solaris, when one recalls their presence-of-absence condition. The material quality of film - “as light as light”⁵⁶ - becomes then next issue. How does the idea of a more-than-material negativity of film fit the quality of light? Invisible light, to distinguish from visible light or image, implies an *infinity of possible images*, and simultaneously is a void: a *white hole of the whole of possible images*.

The third part called “**Solaristic Implications**” (chapter XI to XIV) consists of the completions of some of the aspects elaborated so far, considering ramifications and specifications.

Chapter XI entitled “Man’s Broken Link with Reality and Being-in-Film” starts with the evocation of Bazin’s *myth of total cinema*⁵⁷, describing a film that would recreate the world in its integrity, and thus substitute reality. In our context that would be a film which would convey the real of reality as an actuality, the whole white hole becoming image – the total real as image, as a totality, as the “real image”. In the movie “Solaris” it adopts a physical dimension, as if translating itself into the human. The planet is the white whole of total cinema, an actualization of all possible images as a reality, “The material universe, the plane of immanence”⁵⁸. Bazin’s evocation of total cinema has been inverted into a skeptical hypothesis employed by Deleuze: Modern man no longer believes in the world and faces it as if watching a (bad) movie. Are we living in a film? How can we distinguish the images of film and the ones of natural perception? Our relation towards reality has changed: that which Deleuze calls the link between modern man and the world has broken because

⁵⁶ Stanley Cavell, *The World Viewed*, p. 24

⁵⁷ André Bazin, *op. cit.*, p. 21

⁵⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, p. 61

under the influence of film, of reproduced past, we feel reality as it surrounds us - a mere contingency of the real. In this sense reality is one film, which wakes the longing for total cinema, for the absolute, real image, but cannot achieve it.

The chapter then focuses on the neologism *being-in-film*, which has been mentioned before, but not explained in detail, stemming from Heidegger's *being-in-the world* (which from now on is understood as our being in reality). *Being-in-film* is a state of Dasein while watching a movie, and it simultaneously becomes a way of being a spectator of reality. Heidegger stresses that the signification of *being-in-the-world* entails completeness: "A structure that is primordially and constantly whole."⁵⁹ Yet, a fundamental problem for Heidegger is grasping *being-in-the-world* as a whole: it presupposes Dasein's death. I argue that in film we can grasp the whole of the *being-in-the-world*, as long as *being-in-the-world* is *being-in-film*. This disclosure has to do with the deathlike nature of film; film is fundamentally closed in itself, forming a whole in the sense we have previously set up. Dasein is always still there after the film-death, as it has doubled.

With this in mind it is now possible to reassess the presupposition of the chapter, namely Deleuze's claim of the broken link. Deleuze's approach only takes into account the spectator-Dasein; he describes, in fact, a *being-towards-film*; therefore the Deleuzian problem is to not access *being-in-film*, Dasein's most important catalyst of film as world. However it is argued, that the main question of the link addresses neither film, nor the world, but the "in" of *being-in* to be considered the link of Dasein with one or the other. Further aspects of the link seem to lie in the nature of time.

For Heidegger, Being *is* time, experienced by Dasein; Dasein's standpoint on *being-in* is temporality. A lacking link between Dasein and world would then imply a lack of actuality or temporal presence. Yet what in time makes the actual *real* be present in both, film and world? I propose to think in terms of *double negation* when regarding film as world and world as film. We have defined this negation of negation in film before, concerning the reproduced real of reality in film: Film is real *by negating the presence* of what is real, which again is

⁵⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 225

negated. It is referring to an absence which negates its absence, as it simultaneously evokes presence. Hegel applies a similar principle of the negation of negation to time *and* space, thus enabling Derrida's principle of the trace [*le trace*]: a *becoming-space of time* and a *becoming-time of space*.

I argue in what follows that the trace is exactly the characteristic of time, which shapes film into reality and reality into film. I therefore propose to regard the trace as the Deleuzian link between Dasein and world, and the link between Dasein and film, the *in of being-in of Being as time*. Filming is tracing and tracing is filming. Film captures and reproduces the *presence of the presence of the moment of the now*. *Being-in-the-world* is tracing, as is *being-in-film*. A bundle of new questions emerges: how is this *principle of life* that which persists as a secret of time and space, that which makes the real of reality real? How is it possible that the visitors in *Solaris* can stabilize out of nothing, neutrinos, which are reflected human energy? How does *the now* of being catalyze the future into the past? And how can Dasein come to process constantly towards that which it projects?

Chapter XII, entitled "The Myth of Total Cinema and the Cinematic Suicide of Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*" builds on the claim that the solaristic longing for death is a cinematographic principle actually anchored in German romanticism. Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the 'total work of art', which is regarded as the precursor artform, has anticipated cinema's main aesthetic principles, and fulfills this solaristic longing for death as an aesthetic principle. The smashing and overwhelming principle of 'total enchantment' (*Totalverzauberung*) is thereby the twist to how the death wish is driven forward and realized. It provokes the dissolution of the spectator as well as the annihilation of the character on stage (at the end of the play). The implied switch of realities, which by Walter Benjamin is enabled by what he calls "distraction", resembles Bazin's principle of *total cinema*: the wishful thinking of the complete substitution of reality. This desire is equivalent to an epistemic search for knowledge, for truth or for some manifestation of the real; it longs for the disclosure of that which Heidegger calls "Sein als Ganzes" - "being-a-whole", achieved in death. The wish to go to the cinema corresponds then to a wish for

knowledge as well as a wish for death, corresponding to the romantic “Todessehnsucht”, a dominant idea among artists at Wagner’s time. Simultaneously, the spectator meets the dead ones in film: he is confronted with that which has already passed, with a “show of specters”⁶⁰, and indirectly experiences death (that Dasein doubles by *being-in-film* has been explained in the previous chapter). Cinema thereby corresponds to the continuing need of Dasein to close or conclude the “permanently-unsolved” of being, to reach “being-as-a-whole” (*Seiendes im Ganzen*). This wish causes in Dasein an existential desire for death. Death implies in cinema its own transcendence, constantly, a double negation of Hegelian character: it is precisely our finitude, which makes us look for transcendence of any kind and at any instant. Death also is a narrative principle in the sense of closure. Therefore, *as long as we are mortal, we will search for meaning and for narrative*.

In “Solaris” the desire for death is the main endeavor of central character and conceptual persona Harey. “Solaris” can therefore be designated a “suicide machine”.

Chapter XIII entitled as “The Solaristic Apparatus” approaches the idea to set the planet Solaris as a techno-organic device and thereby evokes Benjamin’s cine-apparatus as well as Karen Barad’s intra-actively entangled apparatus, which she develops from Foucault’s “dispositif”. Barad’s theory is thereby transposed into the context of film and to the solaristic system, whereas Benjamin’s cine-apparatus is deepened by a brief look on his conception of technology. We thereby firstly introduce the idea of intra-active entanglement of mind and matter, arguing with Henri Bergson, to better understand the concept within our scope of analysis. For Bergson the world is image and thereby he defines matter as an aggregate of images which interact with each other⁶¹ and where „interiority and exteriority are only relations among images.”⁶² Mind and material world, subjectivity and reality are related for

⁶⁰ See: Jean-Louis Leutrat, *Vie des fânetomes – Le Fantastique au Cinéma*, p. 41

⁶¹ “I call matter the aggregate of images and perception of matter these same images referred to the eventual action of one particular image, my body.” (Cf. Henri Bergson, *op. cit.*, p. 7)

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 13

Bergson. According to Barad, mind and world, meaning and matter, are intra-actively entangled by diffraction, a position actually based on Niels Bohr's quantum physics. In "Solaris" reality is reproduced while a mysterious process is taking place, in which the reproduced reality starts to interact in form of the visitors who materialize by intra-action. That is why Solaris itself is set as a conceptual persona, a cosmic apparatus, an unknown form of organic machine, a huge brain. Its dynamism fits Barad's reconfiguring of "space-time matters as part of the ongoing dynamism of becoming."⁶³

Walter Benjamin's apparatus is defined as a mechanical device penetrating into reality, further selecting, recording, shaping and assembling the reproduced reality, producing thereby *immediate* reality, more real for the viewer than the reality it depicts. It stresses the positive sense in which Benjamin relies on technology, as the filmic apparatus gives access to what remains sealed otherwise: "immediate reality"⁶⁴ which we have defined as a synonym for the real of reality. This position opposes and is not to be confused with the "apparatus-theory" emerging in the 1960ies. This theory claims an illusory effect of cinema based on the invisibility of the cine-apparatus, deceiving the cine-spectator, just as the cave dwellers in Plato's allegory of the cave are deceived. Contemporary philosophy - and Colin McGinn is hereby referred to as an example - claims the opposite and gives a new and different reading on Plato's cave and its relation to film: cinema is to be read in the platonic sense as a medium, which gives us access to truth, a reading much more close to Benjamin's position (claiming to access "immediate reality"). Furthermore, Benjamin's apparatus (whose nature is technological) anticipates a conflation and reconciliation between technology and nature, which becomes explicit in the narrative of the film "Solaris" as well. The planet-brain Solaris is a super-intelligent, *organic machine*, in the sense of a cyborg, an organic, intelligent machine. Solaris is not human yet creates post-human and trans-human circumstances, tending towards Bazin's

⁶³ Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*, Duke University Press, 2007, p.142 and p. 146

⁶⁴ Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", in: *Illuminations*, p. 233

total cinema, or towards the realization of a universal “worldbrain”⁶⁵: a utopian network, where the organic and the technological sphere would be connected and accessible via the brain.

The solaristic brain is further intra-actively entangled with matter, thereby relying on a new form of diffractive thinking, to be distinguished from reflection, which Barad proposes. Based on Bohr’s ideas of quantum physics this kind of thinking calls for a new kind of causality, wherein measurement plays a central role, yet in a new non-dualist sense: measurements are worldmaking and that is what the planet Solaris does, as well as cinema.

Chapter XIV is entitled “The Real, the Virtual and the Subjective Side of Knowledge”. Departing from Plato’s Cave, insinuating that we are deluded by our perception, this chapter asks for skeptical tradition in philosophy: can we be sure that we are not sitting in Plato’s cave? René Descartes questions whether we can distinguish the actual reality from dreaming. He argues that although we cannot be sure of such distinction, thoughts are true and give a clue as to the truth of our existence. Descartes thereby sets up the dualist thought of modernity, setting oppositional dichotomies like interior and exterior, body and mind, the illusory (fictional) as *opposed* to true reality and knowledge. The only way out for Descartes is to trust thought and logic.

Descartes’ position here reflects what I summarize with the term *virtuality of reality* alluding to a dominant postmodern idea, which questions – influenced by the omnipresence of *mediated reality* of the new media (cyberspace, computer games etc.) – whether we can at all distinguish between reality and fiction. Fiction thereby refers to the new computer generated virtual worlds or “virtual realities”.

For contemporary philosophers like Gilles Deleuze, the term virtual has a complete other meaning and refuses dualism: he distinguishes between the virtual and actual, whereby both are equally real. Building on this position, Slavoj Žižek reverts the hypothesis of the “virtual reality” into the “reality of the virtual”, which is, according to Žižek, isomorphic to the Lacanian Real. Žižek

⁶⁵ Stéphane Degoutin, Gwenola Wagon, *Worldbrain*, (available online)

further refers to quantum physics and evokes the example of light, strikingly resembling the *white hole of the whole of all possible images* we have introduced in chapter X.

The chapter then analyzes Nick Bostrom's "simulation hypothesis" asking if we could be living in a computer simulation, a question which we apply here to "Solaris": we could think about the happenings on the space station as a selective computer generated simulation, set up for unknown purposes by the solaristic brain. The visitors would have then the same nature as some of the humans, designed to measure reactions on Kelvins mind. This hypothesis would emphasize the inhuman pressure felt by the characters of the film, invoking a special emphasis on the emotional and indirect approach between Kelvin and Harey, one taking place by love.

Anticipating thus Harman's hypothesis of approaching that which cannot be known, namely the real object, other then indirectly, for example by love, we can name an allusional principle of solaristic philosophy, relying on a deliberately subjective method to access the real. This kind of approach is then compared to Žižek's claim that the "human eye expands perception" ⁶⁶, because "it inscribes what it 'really sees' into the intricate network of memories and anticipations" ⁶⁷. Žižek's next step consists in assuming subjectivity to be an incompleteness, and as such a part of totality, yet an incomplete one. He further claims that the "thickness of objectivity resisting the subject's grasp is *precisely* the subjective moment" ⁶⁸ which completes reality to a whole. To conclude the chapter I shall draw a correspondence of the Heideggerian nothing and the *domain of the real*, setting them as a cinematographic condition – the *need for projection* to escape the void.

The **fourth part of the analysis** called "Solaristic Conclusions – the Links of the Solaristic System" (consisting in the final chapters XV and XVI) aims to conclude this analysis by unfolding a fourfold structure of the solaristic system,

⁶⁶ Slavoj Žižek, *Organs Without Bodies*, p.4

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.4

⁶⁸ Slavoj Žižek, *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism*, p. 807

a disclosure based on what has been said so far, as well as adding some new aspects.

Chapter XV is entitled “Raising a Solaristic Fourfold” and traces the development of such a fourfold model to summarize the solaristic system. Yet how to build a systematic structure apt for summarizing the conclusions on what is the solaristic system as it has been described so far? As a help construction we will firstly introduce Heidegger’s fourfold and then rely on Harman’s object-oriented ontology (OOO) as an example on how to transpose this fourfold thinking into new contexts. Such a fourfold method – to develop a network of relations based on four poles - will then be applied to the solaristic system.

Heidegger’s fourfold is thereby not only the point of departure but also the point of arrival of this chapter. Its four poles are especially apt to be applied to the movie “Solaris”: Earth, sky, divinities and mortals become in the solaristic system Earth, planet Solaris, visitors and humans - and the mortality of the latter ones in fact plays a major role. Heidegger describes in this context death as a turning principle for the mortals to be able to face “Being as Being” in the following sense: “As the shrine of Nothing, death harbors within itself the presencing of Being. As the shrine of Nothing, death is the shelter of Being.”⁶⁹ Harman asserts that the fourfold is the kernel of Heidegger’s monotonous philosophy (the dichotomy of presence and absence) and of his tool-analysis, stressing that it consists in four poles, mainly ignoring the four entities named by Heidegger which correspond so well to “Solaris”.

Harman gives a new reading on Heidegger’s tool analysis and based on this reading he develops his object-oriented approach, relying on a fourfold structure. Harman’s step consists in designating *readiness-to-hand* of tools (entities) as the real of objects, and their *presence-to-hand* as their sensual properties. He then distinguishes between all of real objects, real qualities, sensual objects and sensual qualities. These four poles are linked through a network of relations, of which I have specially focused on causation and allure

⁶⁹ Martin Heidegger, “The Thing”, in: *Poetry, Language, Thought*, pp. 176 -178

as especially relevant for the solaristic system.

According to Harman, the domain of the real is withdrawing from any possible relation of access: "If there were nothing but real objects and real qualities, there would be no experience and no causal relations at all. Everything would withdraw into private seclusion, devoid of contact."⁷⁰ But then he continues: "We know them [the real qualities of real objects] indirectly, allusively."⁷¹ That is why, a disruption to the regular condition of the domain of the real is needed, although not as a fissure, but as a fusion with the domain of the sensual. This kind of fusion is what Harman names allure: "When this occurs between a withdrawn real object and its sensual qualities, we can speak of allure, since there is something allusive about the way the object signals to us."⁷² This reminds us, of course, of the solaristic principle of being without being, and the presence of absence of the objects in film, mentioned by Cavell.

Furthermore, this is what happens on the planet Solaris with the visitors: they were sensual objects, perceptive memories, and by human allure, they have become real images, real objects. This is how Harey emerges. We might as well speak of solaristic causation here. Indeed, allure and causation are nearly the same for Harman: "causation and allure are so closely related that they turn out to be one and the same."⁷³

Harman calls causation the fusion between real objects and real qualities, which normally withdraw in essence. This inaccessible *essence*, for Harman, "can never come to view."⁷⁴ Yet causation is different from essence, as it is not the withdrawing tension, but the fusion, thus the disturbance of essence; and in this sense an event in an area, which has to remain eventless, yet occurring in this domain of the real: "But when real objects are fused with real qualities allied with it for the first time, we can speak of causation, since this is where consequences unfold for the world."⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Graham Harman, *Bells and Whistles*, p. 63

⁷¹ Graham Harman, *ibid.*, p. 64

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 69

⁷³ Graham Harman, *Guerilla Metaphysics*, p. 214

⁷⁴ Graham Harman, *Bells and Whistles*, p. 69

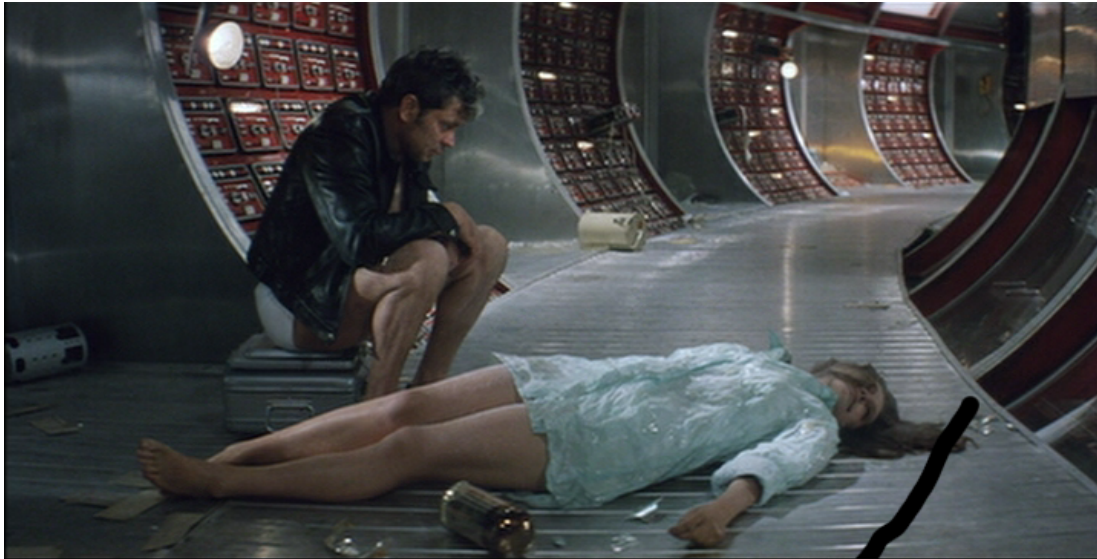
⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 69

The last part of the chapter then focuses on the hypothesis to transpose Heidegger's fourfold to the solaristic system, by firstly clarifying the concepts of the entities constituting the fourfold. To give then an example of the emerging relations within the fourfold, I propose to think about the real image as a *causation* as well as allure, continuing with the following question: What is an image for the solaristic fourfold?

Chapter XVI entitled "Conclusions and Cardinal Tenets of the Solaristic System" aims to finally summarize the solaristic system as a fourfold structure, naming its links and relations between the four poles. These poles, although relying on Heidegger and Harman, pick up the oppositional pairs defined by Epstein and Cavell (mentioned in the introduction), on which film would automatically philosophically reflect. These pairs are then divided into four groups, one group for each entity of the fourfold. The structure outline of the solaristic system consists in 45 theses, as an attempt to embody what has been said so far on the solaristic system in a systematic way. The chapter concludes by briefly reflecting on related issues and perspectives for further analysis.

VI.

THE PLOT OF THE MOVIE “SOLARIS”



With this chapter I aim to give a detailed description of the narrative plot and diegesis of “Solaris”, as well as some impressions on the dramaturgy. Although I recommend the reader to have seen the movie before engaging into this analysis, I want to guarantee the accessibility of my writing to those who do not know the movie at all or have seen it many years ago. Also it is necessary to clarify the underlying understanding of the narrative meaning of the movie. I will also include, as part of the detailed plot description, some observations on the *mise-en-scène*, the kind of framing and montage Tarkovsky uses, as well as some other relevant aesthetic choices regarding image, sound, framing and camera movement.

PART 1

The film opens on Earth. It is summer. Floating seaweeds and leaves in a stream of water. Lingering on their rhythm smoothly moving in the water flow is meditative. As the camera goes up passing on reeds, bushes and very tall grass, we meet the middle-aged protagonist Kris Kelvin during a walk into nature. We can feel the heat and the smell of green trees and grass, the flowers and the insects, suggested by zoom in and long pans in movement, extremely close and a tactile use of sound. A beautiful black horse steps by.



Kris Kelvin, now on $\frac{3}{4}$ scale, is revealed as immersed in his thoughts; he walks near his father's home (as we understand later), an old-fashioned, big wooden countryside house, yet with a modern country road nearby. Kelvin observes from far away how a visitor (named Berton) arrives by car accompanied by a child and is welcomed by a man we later learn to be Kelvin's father. They wave and call for Kelvin, who doesn't seem willing to speak and would rather be alone.

The father and the visitor are conversing and we understand that Kelvin is a "solaristic scientist" who now takes daily morning walks into nature for at least one hour, because sometimes he works for the whole night. We come into the house. The fact that it is wooden and full of small objects indicates a homage to the classical human culture, a balanced harmony between knowledge and nature: old measurement instruments, a cage with birds, white busts of admired people from former times, graphics from balloon

aviation, selected wooden furniture; flowers and tree branches from the countryside in vases reinforce the peaceful, harmonic ambience. The photo of a woman with long blond hair, looking right into the camera, receives some instants of attention. Her intense gaze makes her very present.

We further understand from the talking, that soon Kelvin will have to leave Earth for a mission on a space station and that his first report will be of crucial importance for the continuation of the station. Berton expresses his concern, that messages from there seem confusing or even incomprehensible. If Kelvin confirms this impression, the space station will be taken off the Solaris orbit. Berton came to speak with Kelvin not to prematurely rush a regretful decision. He also admires the house; the father explains that he has actually reconstructed his grandfather's home, as he despises modern culture. Rain starts, a heavy, warm summer rain, illuminated by the sun.



Kelvin stands outside on the terrace of the house, in a melancholic mood. The rain is soaking his clothes and hair, but he enjoys it, to feel nature. On the table lie apples, the leftovers of a tea session, and bread in a bowl. The tea set is old-fashioned, from the XIX Century; it is made of traditional, white-blue porcelain. The rain soddens everything on the table. For a moment, Kelvin gets cold. The rain stops; the countryside blubbers. As well here the camera frames details on an extremely close scale and the sound seems tactile.

Back inside. The father goes away because he says that he has seen what Berton has brought with him too many times already. In the presence of Anna, who is the sister of the father, Kelvin and Berton watch an old video report, in black and white images. The situation shows Berton many years

ago, visibly younger, while he testified before a kind of military court consisting of scientists as well. Berton had worked on the Solaris space station as a pilot. When he became part of a rescue team in search of a lost aircraft, he got lost himself, swallowed by an odd and uncanny fog. On court Berton claims to have observed how part of the ocean surface began to change, transmuting into a gardenlike island. The assembled court members seem shocked and unwilling to believe him: a garden millions of miles away from Earth? Berton evokes the evidence of the video recording he made during the flight. Surprisingly it turns out that the camera tape only shows clouds and fog. Berton has no explanation. He is very confused now. He continues to report, in spite the increasing disbelief of his audience. After the garden he sighted a living being: an oversized, rightfully gigantic child, covered by a slimy skin, swimming naked in the ocean. He had never seen this child before and felt disgust. All the specialists, except one, discredit Berton. They accuse him to have been suffering from hallucinations due to the different climate conditions of the planet.



Berton stops the videotape. He is upset and confused by his own memories. He still is convinced of the truth of his experience. He asks Kelvin for a private conversation. They go into the garden.

Outside the boy who came with Berton has sighted the black horse in the stable and is afraid, because he doesn't know what that is which is "staring at me from the dark!" Anna goes with him to the stable, explaining that the horse is gentle and beautiful.

Kelvin discredits Berton, categorizing him as one of those who have helped to create the impasse of "solaristics" (the fact-based science about the planet), by excessive fantasizing. He explains he will officially declare the failure of solaristic science by removing the station, or, take extreme measures and bomb the planet with high intensity beams if necessary. Berton, again humiliated, protests and distances himself from such a kind of knowledge obtained "at any prize". Knowledge has to stay connected to the foundations of morality. Kelvin thinks that morality is a category, which is too human, and closes with the remark that Berton must admit that he cannot be sure himself, that the being he saw, had not been a hallucination. Berton gets now so furious that he puts an end to the fruitless conversation announcing his departure. Kelvin's father then gets upset, scolding Kelvin for being so arrogant to Berton. "It is dangerous to send men like you to the cosmos, which is so fragile", so he claims. *"Even on Earth the damage would already have been too big!"* But Kelvin is not convinced at all.

Inside Anna and the father watch a TV report about the space station Solaris. The planet is suspected to be an enormous brain, or the ocean covering it - a "thinking substance". In any case, both promising hypotheses could hitherto not be substantiated. Although Solaris has been under scientific investigation for nearly a century, its nature, structure and logic are to be sought beyond human comprehension. Solaristic science is both, scientifically and logically refuted but some continue to "believe". Currently, from all the 85 scientists who have been brought to the space station for investigation, only three have remained: the astro-biologist Sartorius, the cyberneticist Snout and the physiologist Gibarian. The TV-news show portraits of each of them.

The program is interrupted by a video-call from Berton on his way back into town. He says he must add something he has never talked about, and which he should have told Kris: the child he had seen on Solaris after all had the same appearance as the son of a former Solaris scientist who had died on that mission. Berton met the real child later on Earth, in natural, biological size. When he had sighted the oversized child on Solaris, he had not known the child on Earth yet. He wishes Kelvin to still consider this occurrence. He says that Kevin should not think about it before he leaves, but when he is

there, it might matter. The camera turns away from the monitor and we see that Kelvin was standing in a corner of the room and has heard the conversation between Berton and the father.



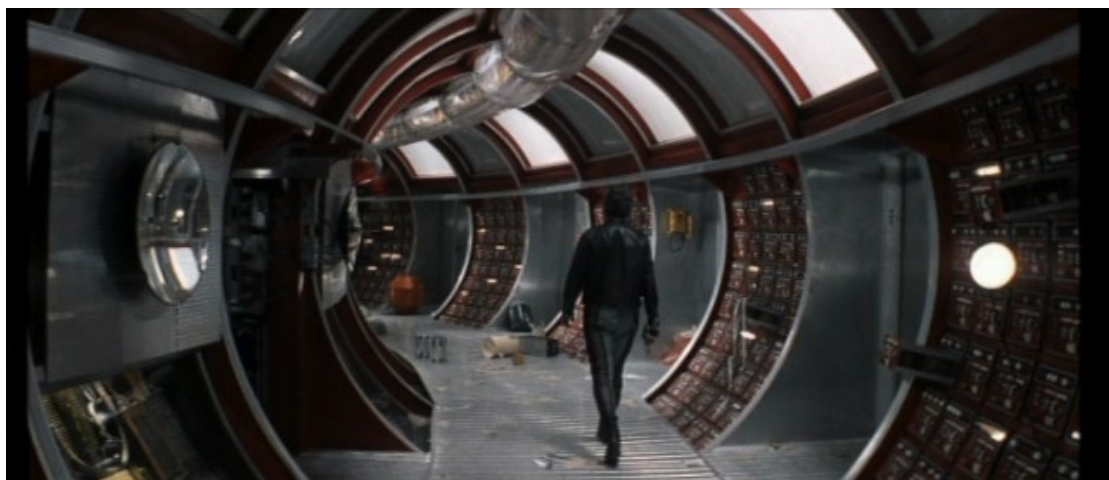
Some outlandishness is transmitted in the sequence which follows: Berton calls from the car and we see him driving on big crowded highways. Tarkovsky gives a big emphasis on filming the movement and the speed, and contrasts the over-crowdedness outside with the solitude inside Berton's car. Sometimes the image passes to black and white, as if we suddenly would be into memories; then, the last shot of the sequence shows a cross of several highways, some on bridges. One highway, in the middle of the image just dissolves into another highway (see image above); again, it is as if something would be remembered rather than really being there.

At night, Kelvin burns some old documents in his father's garden. Thereby a photograph of a young woman is shown; we later know to be his deceased wife Harey. It is characteristic for this photograph that she looks with a serious expression right into the camera, as if questioning the person watching her. It gives the photograph a strange and vivid presence, also characteristic for the photograph of the mother, which we have seen before in the house. Her absence suggests she is also dead. Kelvin mentions to the father a film with a campfire, which he will also take with him on his journey. Anna steps away because she cannot hide her tears. The nocturnal landscape seems to comfort her.

Kelvin leaves into outer space. The cosmic journey is filmed merely by the juxtaposition of two shots: Kelvin's face in a helmet, which turns upside down. From a radio transmitted voice off we understand that the journey to Solaris is not free of trouble. Then we see the dark cosmos, with the planet and the station finally being approached. Kelvin calls for reception and answer, but there is no reaction from the station. When he gets out of the ship (which we never see), with just one big bag, nobody receives him at the disembarking hall. He calls for human presence, yet, again, nobody answers. The door to the inside of the station opens automatically.



The first thing Kelvin sees of the station is a corridor with walls with vein-like cables. He passes more and more cables hanging from the walls in disorder, as if violence took place. Strange garbage lies around. One cable sparks electricity. Kelvin snaps down the cable to prevent fire. A kind of alarm noise starts and Kelvin goes after the noise.



At a long, curved corridor, he finds a door bearing the name of Dr. Snout. He knocks, opens the door, but nobody is inside. When he closes the door he hears some jingling bells from behind. Kelvin looks back and just sees the foot of a girl disappearing behind the corner of the corridor. Simultaneously she has thrown a colored plastic ball into his direction. As he kneels down to catch the ball, he hears somebody singing crazily. He gets up and turns around. The door of Snout's cabin is open now. Snout stands near the entrance and seems to make signs to someone outside the frame, in the back of his cabin room. Mostly surprised, Kelvin calls for Snout, who now turns around. We can see that he is completely scared by Kelvin's presence and can hardly speak. Kelvin enters and introduces himself as the psychologist Kelvin. Snout stares at him, as if doubting that he is real. Kelvin asks whether Snout has received the radiogram announcing his coming. Snout, who has a bandage at his wrist, sits down and confirms. His voice is husky.



Kelvin gets nearer but Snout starts to behave aggressively. Kelvin asks him why he is so antsy, to which Snout apologizes. Kelvin wants to know about the other two, Sartorius and Gibarian. Snout answers that the first one had locked himself up, and that the other one is dead. He explicates that it was suicide, and we can see how much it has affected him. Kelvin is shocked, knowing that Gibarian would never have acted like this under normal circumstances. Snout explains that Gibarian was in a profound state of depression. He mentions a mysterious disorder. He then recommends that Kelvin have some rest, install himself in a room and come back in one hour. Kelvin insists on speaking with Sartorius. Snout doubts Sartorius would receive anybody, reiterating that he locked himself up in the laboratory.

Kelvin says that he is beginning to understand that something truly extraordinary has happened, yet he believes that he could maybe help. He pauses mid-sentence, because something seems to have emerged behind Snout: some hanging bed sheets are shaking rhythmically. Reacting to that, Snout quickly pushes Kelvin towards the door. He tells Kelvin to come back in one hour; and if he were to see someone or something other than Sartorius or him, he should not lose his head. When the horrified Kelvin asks as to what he could possibly see, Snout mysteriously answers that this would only depend on himself. Most importantly, Snout reminds Kelvin that whatever he sees is no hallucination, and also – that they are not on Earth. Snout gets visibly nervous, as the moving noise reinforces. He obviously wouldn't want Kelvin to see the source of the noise. Kelvin suddenly sees the head of a boy, when Snout literally closes the door in his face.



Kelvin walks around the corridor and finds an empty room. He brings in his bag, when he hears a noise. He reacts to it, stepping out again. He finds Gibarian's cabin. On the door hangs a child's drawing of a man, entitled "human being". Inside Gibarian's cabin, there is a big mess, a weird decoration seemingly arranged by somebody completely crazy. A note is stuck on a big monitor: "for K. Kelvin". Kelvin switches on the tape recorder near the monitor. Gibarian tells him about his intention of suicide. He defends himself; he says he is not mad; it merely is a question of conscience. The problem is that nobody could explain what had happened to him. At least here (on Solaris), 'it' could happen to everyone. Gibarian also claims to share the opinion of Sartorius: it is advisable to bomb the plasma of the planet with high-

powered x-rays, because there is no other choice to stop what is going on, and to get in touch with “this monster”...



Kelvin interrupts the tape preview as he hears somebody at the door who makes his presence known by jingling bells. It is the girl with the ball! Kelvin presses himself against the door and waits her to leave. He then takes the tape and a revolver he has found among Gibarian's scattered personal things. He leaves the room. On the corridor, Kelvin thinks about returning to Snout, yet sees him through the door, standing and looking, as if afraid that somebody could enter. Kelvin therefore decides to explore the station. The whole time we have the feeling of the presence of a strange energy, which is suggested through hollow electronic sound waves and which makes Kelvin sweat and feel uncomfortable. He knocks at the door of Sartorius, who has installed himself at another part of the station.

Sartorius comes out only after some talking, insistent on not letting Kelvin into the laboratory. We can feel something moving inside. Sartorius is arrogant, judges Gibarian's suicide and Kelvin's "over-emotional" responses, because the only thing, which would interest him is the duty towards science. A strange dwarf suddenly bursts out of the room; Sartorius manages to catch him and put him back inside the lab. He recommends Kelvin to adapt first before they have a talk. Then Sartorius locks himself up again. Kelvin goes back to one of the round big windows nearby, but the outer view, one of total darkness before, is now of such a bright white light that it hurts the eyes.



Outside the window we see the strange ocean-covered surface of the planet, a blue-grey, slowly moving soup with sparkling lights and emanating yellow fog. In the soundtrack we hear again the hollow sound, and then the bells of the girl. She passes by. Kelvin turns around, deciding to follow her. She leads him to the freezing room, where he finds Gibarian's body, wrapped in transparent plastic blankets.

Kelvin goes back to Snout, who this time seems to be expecting him. Kelvin wants to know who the little girl was, whether she was human, and whether Snout also saw her. Strangely, Snout doesn't like this questioning, and, as if scandalized, asks Kelvin: "And you, how will I know who you are?" The girl passes by the door, and in the following conversation the rules of space continuity are broken. Kelvin begs Snout for an explanation, but things prove too difficult for Snout to explain. The camera turns in slow circles; this way Kelvin and Snout appear and disappear, yet in unexpected positions. As Snout doesn't answer, Kelvin goes to his cabin. He closes the door; the image fades to black and white.

Kelvin makes sure the door is closed and even puts two heavy metal boxes in front. Then he switches on the tape from Gibarian. The girl who Kelvin had just seen on the corridor, steps into the frame: she obviously is familiar with Gibarian and dressed in the exactly same way. Gibarian doesn't explain her unexplainable presence; he just asks, if Kelvin could see her. He repeats that he is not mad, and that 'it' is connected to his conscience. After watching,

Kelvin lies down, exhausted, the revolver at his side; again he feels disturbed, this feeling is enhanced by a hollow sound. He falls asleep.

At dawn we suddenly notice the presence of a young woman with long brown hair. The image is now back to color. After staring a while into the emptiness without moving, she approaches Kelvin, who lies on his bed. His eyes are open. His face expression suggests that he doesn't know, whether he is sleeping or not. The woman lies down next to Kelvin, kissing him in a way that implies an everyday love relationship. Kelvin now is completely horrified, but tries not to show emotion – yet he seems to know his visitor and calls her Harey. He asks her how she got here; at the same time he feels threatened by her, groping secretly for the revolver. They get up; she behaves completely naturally, looking for her shoes, as if she would have been here yesterday and before already. She finds the photograph we saw earlier in the film, on Earth: it is hers. She looks at the photograph without recognizing herself; then, she sees her reflection in a mirror behind: “Kris, it's me!” She doesn't understand and says she doesn't seem to remember anything about herself. She only knows she is Kelvin's wife. Harey believes to have forgotten all the rest because of a strange illness. This feeling causes her some unsettlement.



We understand that surprisingly she also has no awareness of just having appeared out of nothing, and that she is not supposed to exist. She probably is the double of the woman from the photograph; yet she claims to be in love with Kelvin. When Kelvin tells her he has to go to work, she insists to come with him.

She doesn't know why, but feels she must always be with him. Kelvin gives her a space suit, and dresses himself another one. To get her out of the clothes she is wearing, Kelvin has to cut up her dress, which strangely has no zipper or even seam.

To get rid of her spooky presence, Kelvin sets Harey a trap at the disembarking-hall: he tells her to enter a rocket-like space shuttle; he would have to do something first, and then follow her. As she enters, Kelvin quickly presses the bottom to close the spaceship's door and then another one for takeoff. Harey is sent into outer space; we can hear her scream inside the rocket as it is taking off. Kelvin forgets to leave the room on time and gets hurt by the rocket's ignition, as he has to extinguish a fire on his suit.

PART 2

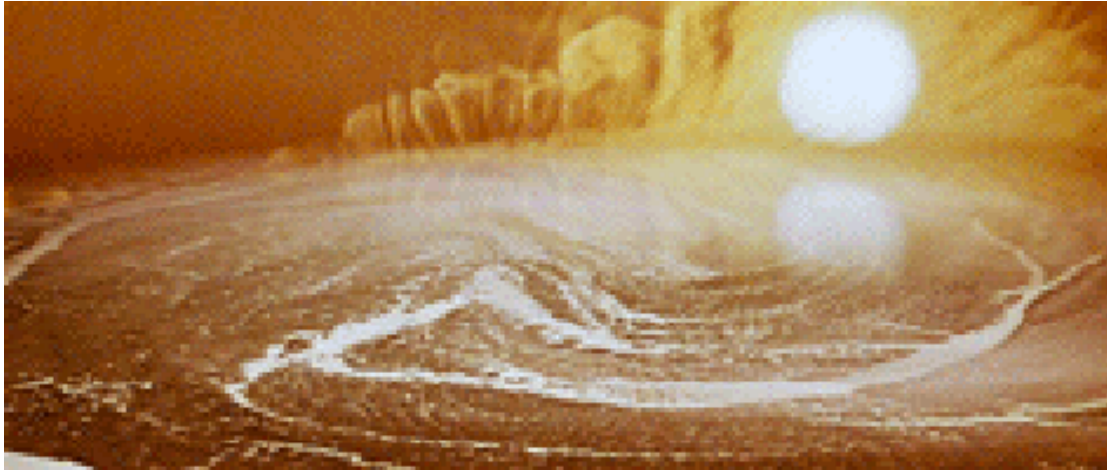
Snout joins Kelvin in his cabin room; he wants to know what happened because he heard voices. Snout laughs out as Kelvin confirms. He cynically asks how many attempts of violence were necessary? But somehow he seems relieved, now that Kelvin has the same problem as the other scientists on the station – at any rate, he becomes more friendly and helpful, taking care of Kelvin's wounds. Kelvin explains that the woman was his wife who had committed suicide a few years ago. Snout recounts that the phenomenon began after the scientists had struck the ocean with x-rays. Apparently, the planet has reacted by scanning the humans' minds as they sleep. As a result, humanoid beings materialize out of their memory: they are the so-called "visitors", and each visitor is individually shaped, depending on the life and conscience of the human they are attached to. Snout says that Kelvin's visitor will come back as soon as he sleeps, but as another one, not knowing about the first. His prediction is right.



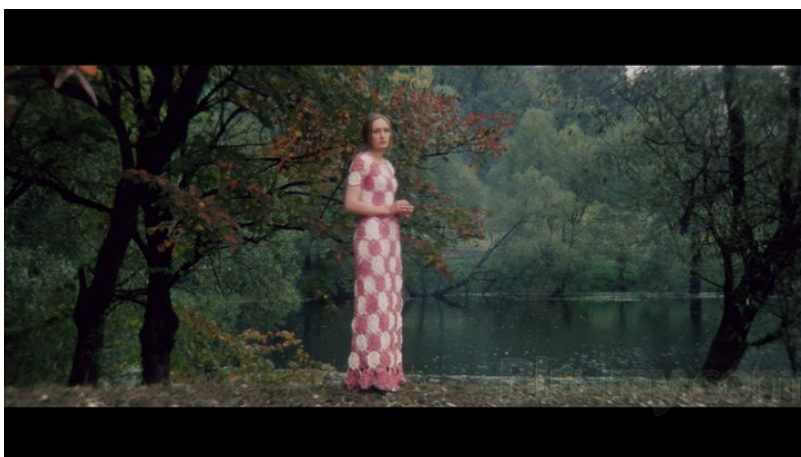
Kelvin falls asleep, and in the dark room Harey suddenly is there again, searching for him: “Kris?” He tenderly calls for her to come to him and she approaches while undressing. She already knows how to undress by tearing the dress. Lying calmly down with him she doesn’t seem to remember she has been there before. In the morning Kelvin wakes up earlier than her and sees the dress of the former Harey lying on the table. He grabs the clothes quickly and leaves the cabin to hide them in a corner outside. From the inside, we hear Harey scream and something begins to pound at and press against the cabin door with violent force. It is Harey. Within seconds she has smashed the door and falls to Kelvin’s feet, bleeding, losing consciousness from the effort. Shocked, he lifts her up and brings her to bed, as she remains senseless. Seconds later he gets back to her with the disinfection materials, but realizes that her wounds have already healed nearly completely. The phone rings: Snout invites Kelvin to join him and Sartorius at the laboratory.

To their surprise, Kelvin brings Harey with him, and introduces her as his wife. Snout seems undecided, yet Sartorius is mistrusting and talks about the “visitors”, without wanting to shake hands with Harey. He then reveals his most recent insights: the visitors are made of neutrinos, which stabilize through the field force of Solaris. Snout leaves angrily, because he cannot stand Harey’s humanlike behavior and her acceptance by Kelvin, so in contrast with Sartorius’ cynical, emotionless approach to the situation. Kelvin takes a blood sample from Harey, and discovers her blood always regenerates, even if solved in acid. She is immortal! Sartorius asks then if

Kelvin intends to take the examination of Harey scientifically seriously. Kelvin protests: Harey has emotions and feelings. Besides, she is his wife! He condemns any kind of experiment on her as inhuman. Sartorius warns Kelvin that he has established emotional contact. They separate in dissension, Kelvin ironically proclaiming himself “guilty”.



The ocean of Solaris is turning in circles, forming a vortex. Kelvin shows Harey the film he brought from Earth, the one with the “campfire” he has mentioned to his father. In the film we see Kelvin as a child and adolescent, the mother, the father and finally Harey, dressed like she is now, waving to the camera operator. The mother and also Harey stare directly into the camera, staying several moments immobile.



When the film ends, Harey goes to the mirror and looks at herself. She claims that she doesn’t know herself; she cannot even remember her own face, when she closes her eyes. She asks Kelvin, if he does know himself. Kelvin’s

answer “Sure, just as any human being” sounds cruel. Harey then insists to have some memories of her own, but we have the impression they are invented; they don’t match with Kelvin’s, who finally gives up correcting her. He tells her instead a lie: that she didn’t want to go with him to another town and they never saw each other again. We know this is not even half of the truth, but Harey agrees as if she would remember it.



In the next scene, Harey sleeps, while Kelvin is thoughtful. Snout knocks on the door and Kelvin opens. Snout tells him that during three or four hours the regeneration will be slowed down and the arrival of visitors suspended. They continue to talk because Snout has the idea that they could try to send bundled x-rays of thoughts to the planet, to suggest to the planet to stop the visitors. The conversation is heard in voice off, while we see Harey’s face sleeping. Suddenly she opens her eyes, and thus hears the talk. Snout suggests that Kelvin should be the one transmitting his thoughts. But Kelvin has doubts; he asks what would happen if in his subconscious he wants Harey to disappear! And how could they trust “this strange soup out there”? Sartorius’ second proposal, which Snout communicates, is to activate an annihilator, which would destabilize the neutrino systems. Kelvin refers to this choice of juxtaposed unpleasant actions as extortion. Snout then invites Kelvin to come with him to see Sartorius, as Harey seems sleeping: “she already sleeps, this will end badly”.

Kelvin accepts and leaves with Snout. We see Harey struggling in her bed, trying to calm down and not to run after Kelvin. Apparently she has heard the conversation. Kelvin suddenly has doubts and runs back to her. He finds

Harey half-conscious and asks her for forgiveness while she recovers. Again, the planet's ocean changes his surface color, continuously turning in vortices.



In the middle of the night, Harey cannot sleep and urges Kelvin to talk to her. While he has been sleeping she has had a talk with Sartorius. He has told her that she is the double of a woman named Harey, who was married to Kelvin and killed herself on Earth. She thus concludes not to be Harey, but “something else”. As she grasps now the weird circumstances of her existence, she says: “I feel as if somebody is fooling us around”. She insists on knowing the story of Harey’s death. Kelvin tells her about the separation and that he had left ampoules with a poison in the fridge. He was worried, but not enough, and when he came back after three days, he found her dead. Harey asks why she had done it, and Kelvin answers that maybe it was because she felt he hadn’t loved her enough. He also assures Harey that now he is truly in love with her. Harey believes him and calms down.

In the library Harey and Kelvin, together with Sartorius, wait for Snout, who had announced the celebration of his birthday. The library symbolizes the highpoints of human knowledge and classical culture: woodenly paneled walls, thousands of old books, busts of certain admired figures, old globes, instruments, Chinese vases and paintings on the wall before the rise of modern art. When Snout finally shows up, he is in quite a state: his suit has a big scratch as if from a fight; he is emotionally nettled, probably drunk. The conversation again revolves around Harey’s condition of not being human, a

condition Sartorius despises, accusing Kelvin of lying in bed with his ex-wife instead of doing serious scientific investigation.

Harey defends herself, claiming that she is becoming human: she has her own feelings and memories. She has learned to be alone and started to sleep. She also says that Kelvin is better than Sartorius and Snout because he is worried about human aspects in non-human conditions; whereas Sartorius and Snout are ignoring their visitors and only hate them. She further claims the visitors would just be them: what they hate about themselves would be their own conscience. Sartorius leaves disgusted, and Snout gets drunk, walking around singing. As Kelvin keeps him some company, he announces that at 5pm there will be thirty seconds of non-gravity on the station. In sudden panic Kelvin runs back to the library and finds Harey in a contemplative state, smoking a cigarette and looking at Peter Bruegel's painting "Hunters in the Snow".



Tarkovsky films the painting with tactile movement that is accompanied by a soundtrack evoking such an impressive realism, as if Harey had the power to awaken the painting when she looked at it. Kelvin and Harey celebrate together the moment of non-gravity, floating through the library.



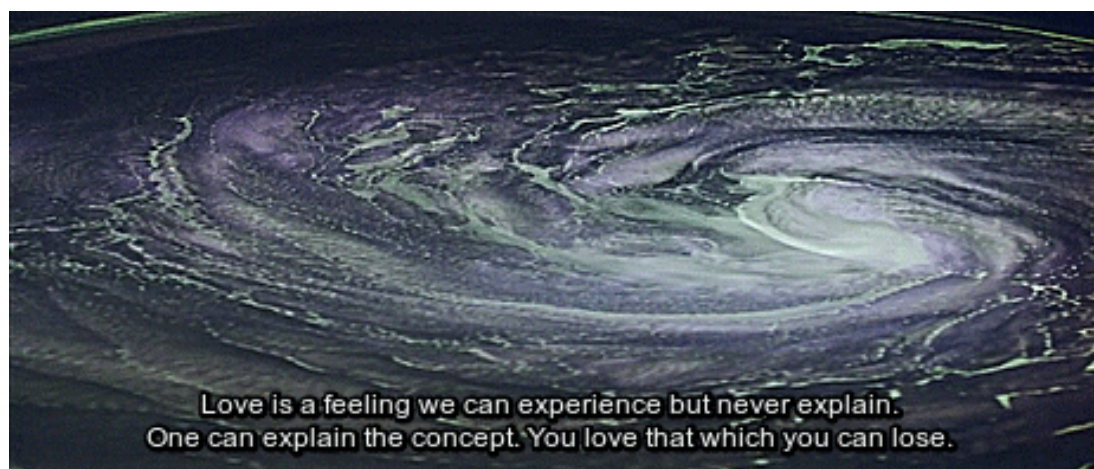
But the desire to commit suicide is part of Harey's process to become human: she knows she is not supposed to exist, at the same time understanding that in order to be really human she has to become mortal. Harey therefore tries to kill herself by drinking liquid oxygen. Of course she fails: as much as she hurts herself, she will always resurrect. The scene opens as Kelvin finds her frozen body lying on the curved corridor. Snout passes by as she resurrects and he is disgusted. He can hardly stand the process, while Kelvin tries to comfort her with a blanket.



When she comes back she is in a complete nervous crisis. She does not know who she is, she feels disgusting, she has doubts about Kelvin, about who he is (is he like her?) and about how he can love her. Her suffering has reached its peak at this point of the story.

Time has passed by. Harey and Kelvin recognize now the depth of their love. Therefore he proposes not to return to Earth: they could live at the space station forever. Harey is afraid. She is also concerned about Kelvin, who visibly got sick. Half delirious, he walks around in a fever. In the corridor he meets Snout, who is at a window, staring at the ocean's surface. Snout says: "The ocean's activity is increasing. Your encephalogram may be the cause." But Kelvin is mentally not present. His speech is not coherent and he circles around suffering. Then suddenly, as if something would attack him inside his head: "No, I don't believe that, I cannot accept that..."

He now looks himself at the ocean, which is in high activity, changing its color into green and violet again, swirling in continuous vortex movement. In off we hear his voice: "Let's suppose I love you. Love is something we can feel, but never explain. One can only explain the idea. You love that which you can lose. Yourself, a woman, your country... Until today, humanity, the world, had no way to reach love. There are so few of us! Perhaps the reason we are here, is to understand, for the first time, human beings as a reason to love?"



It seems as if the intent and meaning Tarkovsky wants to transmit by making this film is concentrated in this statement. The theme of love will still deserve our further attention throughout.



Kelvin continues his fever walk through the corridors of the space station, asking for Gibarian's reasons for suicide, claiming he did not die of fear but of shame and that the salvation of humanity would lie in its shame. Snout and Harey brace him while he is walking. As they pass by the windows, the light coming in is partly so strong, that from time to time it merges the whole image into white. These white flashes get stronger and longer, until we enter into a universe of fever-dreams, where any logic has become subjective.



Short frame shots of the father's house on Earth in sepia-color. Then, back to color, Kelvin lying on his Solaris-bed, which is located in an unreal chamber made of mirrors; further away a vase with earthly flowers at his bed's side. Harey comes in, caresses Kelvin's head; then she looks up, directly into the camera. It is a look so emotionless that she does not seem human. It is a look as much out of time as the one on the photographs (on Earth).



The camera turns around and we see several Harey's and the mother, even the dog from Earth. We are now in Kelvin's cabin room on Solaris, decorated with flowers and fruits from Earth. Then, in a black-and white sequence Kelvin meets his mother in a strange room decorated with elements from Earth as well as the space station. She seems younger than him. He apologizes for being two hours late; she asks about the trip. He says it was ok, just a bit tiring.



We learn he doesn't feel happy and is very lonely, which she feels sorry about. She reproaches him for not having phoned. We have the impression that the conversation is not only absurd for being a dream: the mother is dead, and she doesn't seem conscious about that fact. She tells

Kelvin to take better care of himself, since he seems out of shape and neglected (he wears a pair of pajamas). She discovers that his arm is full of dirt. Thus she brings water and washes his arm. She kisses him, as if he were a child. He starts crying, but she leaves. He wakes up. He lies in a room on the space station; Snout is taking care of him. Kelvin asks for Harey.

Snout reads a farewell letter from Harey to him. While he has been hallucinating in his fever-dreams, Harey conspired with Sartorius and Snout. She writes that it was her own decision and asks him not to blame anybody: it would only be for the best. Snout explains, that she did it for him. Kelvin has now to process the shock.

In the room there are leftovers from the fever dreams, like the jug with which the mother has brought water to wash Kelvin's arm, the flowers in the vase or Harey's scarf. In voice over, Snout and Kelvin have a philosophical conversation about losing their mind in the cosmos. Snout tells that after they had sent Kelvin's encephalogram to the planet, none of the visitors have shown up. Something new, beyond their understanding, is happening to the planet, because small islands have begun to form on the surface. Outside the room we see Sartorius listening to the conversation, lacking the courage to enter. Then he fades out.

In a scene at the library, Snout and the recuperated Kelvin are in a melancholic mood, thinking about the sense of life, in voice over. "Yet to preserve all the simple human truths, we need mysteries. The mystery of happiness, death, love." In conclusion: when humans don't know their date of death, they feel like immortals. Kelvin does not know what to do next and hesitates whether to go back to Earth or to wait for Harey's unlikely return. We hear his continuous voice over as we fly in the image over white Solaris-fog.

The film ends similarly to how it has started: on Earth, in nature, at the exact same place as in the opening scene, with the only difference that it is winter now. The lake is half frozen, the grass is ugly, grey and wet, and the trees without leaf. Kelvin advances to his father's home; his dog welcomes him.



When Kelvin approaches the house, he stops at the window, astonished about that which he beholds inside: his father is cleaning books, but it rains inside the house and the rain is hot and fuming. The father looks up, spots Kelvin and comes out. Kelvin kneels in front of him; the father lays his hand on his son's head. As the image zooms out into a perspective from outer space, we understand that we are not on Earth. The scene we just saw has happened on the surface of the planet Solaris, which has produced one small earthlike island, out of the memory of Kelvin...



VII.

A Short History Of Philosophy Of Film

1. From Jean Epstein's Robot-Philosopher to Benjamin's Apparatus

Let me finish this first part with a short excursion into the history of philosophy of film, a realm to which the solaristic system belongs and builds on: through explaining the state of the art, the emergence of the solaristic system becomes comprehensible as a necessary step for advancing within the realm of philosophy of film. I thereby propose to evoke those film-philosophical and theoretical positions, which reflect on and through film in a way relevant to our scope of analysis, treating issues such as film's relation to reality or the ontological self-reflexivity of the medium, but also other topics, less obvious now, although important for the further development. The most relevant authors will be referred to throughout and embedded into our context. We cannot isolate the concerns of philosophy of film from the problems of philosophy in general, such as the question of reality, or from the subject of philosophy itself. The solaristic system builds on the claim of inseparability of philosophy and film that I have previously mentioned relying on Cavell: "Film is made for philosophy"⁷⁶.

⁷⁶ Stanley Cavell, *Reflections on a Life of Philosophy: An Interview with Stanley Cavell*, p. 19

I suggest a chronological approach from the very beginning of film theory, which already is pervaded by philosophical concerns, albeit undermined in their input. These early reflections have been continuously subject to new readings, and their full philosophical potential is still to be explored. One of the first explicit claims for the rise of philosophy of film was pronounced in a time when the medium was still developing and discovering its own aesthetic possibilities. “The philosophy of cinema has still to be raised”⁷⁷, said Jean Epstein in 1921, immediately followed by the observation that movies are “a new poetic and philosophy”⁷⁸, yet without any further explication on his anticipatory intuition. 25 years later, in 1946, the same author finally publishes “The Intelligence of a Machine” where he anticipates the Deleuzian approach of “cine-thinking”.

Epstein, who was both a theorist and a film director, designs film to be a manifold of time and defends an immanent thinking of truth, which is put into praxis by the cinematograph, “the robot-philosopher”⁷⁹, a thinking machine with its own intelligence, which develops “cinematographic thought”⁸⁰. Again, this idea is remarkable, insofar as it has become - in one way or the other - the most grounding argument for the emergence of philosophy of film. Epstein previews cinema as a pioneer of a variety of thinking machines⁸¹ to come, characterized by producing virtual realities, which he describes as *unreal*. In my consideration this position is not to be understood as anti-realist, but rather as *beyond* such distinction as reality or non-reality. According to Epstein, reality is somehow not existent, because it is composed of a “sum of unrealities”⁸², deriving from continuity (time) and discontinuity (coexistence in

⁷⁷ Jean Epstein, “Bonjour Cinéma”, in: *Ecrits sur le cinema*, p. 91 (translation mine – C.R.)

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 94

⁷⁹ Jean Epstein, *Bonjour Cinéma und andere Schriften zum Kino*, p. 83 (translation mine – C.R.)

⁸⁰ Jean Epstein, *The Intelligence of a machine*, p. 66

⁸¹ “No, the thinking machine is not exactly a utopia any longer; the cinematograph, like the computing machine, represents its first implementation, already working far better than a rough model.” (Cf. Ibid., p. 65)

⁸² Ibid., p. 15

space), two different “interchangeable modes of unreality”⁸³, which he also calls perspectives:

The cinematograph (...) shows time to be merely a perspective resulting from the succession of phenomena, the way space is merely a perspective of the coexistence of things. Time contains nothing we might call time-in-itself, no more so than space comprises space-in-itself. (...) Thus, after having taught us about the unreality of both, continuity and discontinuity, the cinematograph rather abruptly ushers us into the unreality of space-time.⁸⁴

The cinematograph discloses the non-temporal nature of time and the non-spatial nature of space and produces thinking based on the conflation of time and space into space-time.

Epstein is only one example of a range of early theorists of cinema who have pioneered the attempt to define the very nature of film. Rudolf Arnheim, Hugo von Hofmannsthal or Hugo Münsterberg hold clearly non-realist positions, by defining film as an art and as the substitution of reality⁸⁵. Sergei Eisenstein has argued for the editing of cinema being the producer of cinematic expression and has therefore studied different patterns of montage inspired by Japanese haiku poetry. He argued for an assembled reality in film, involved into an eidetic process of thought, which Gilles Deleuze describes as a shock on the cerebral cortex, deriving from the movement of the image. This context of relating the human mind, reality and film evokes Henri Bergson who compares in “Creative Evolution” the way we obtain knowledge with the way the cinematograph registers and reproduces reality⁸⁶.

⁸³ Ibid., pp. 15-16

⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 24-25

⁸⁵ Münsterberg was followed by Jean Mitry and finally Christian Metz, who used semiology to analyze film; their positions are too representationalist to be fruitful for the solaristic system which argues for film beyond symbolism.

⁸⁶ “This is what the cinematograph does. With photographs, each of which represents the regiment in a fixed attitude, it reconstitutes the mobility of the regiment marching. (...) The movement does indeed exist here; it is in the apparatus. (...) Such is the contrivance of the cinematograph. And such is also that of our knowledge. (...) We take snapshots, as it were,

I certainly agree that '*film substitutes reality*', even if for other reasons than early film theory. In my perspective, the following chain is correct: *film is reality* and therefore *film substitutes reality* while it unfolds (whatever we mean by reality, recalling the unknown variable). This substitution constitutes the logical backside of the claim that film reproduces and therefore produces reality. Remember: *On the one hand we have the image of reality, while on the other hand this image dominates reality, because it substitutes reality, becoming real in itself* (each time it is unfolded within space-time). Thereby Hugo Münsterberg's psychology-driven assertion, which compares the way we perceive reality and the way we perceive film, somehow explains the impetuous power of the specific reality of film on the human mind.

In clear opposition stand the so-called *ontological realists of film theory* like Erwin Panofsky, André Bazin and Pier Paolo Pasolini, who literally claim that film is a *reproduction of reality* outside any symbolism or system of representation. Curiously Panofsky takes a similar position as Epstein by characterizing cinema as "*a dynamization of space and respectively a spacialization of time*"⁸⁷. Both Bazin and Kracauer argue for the photographic basis of film and its privileged position among the arts as to recording physical reality. Thereby Bazin is interested in the ontogenesis of the cinematographic image. It is on this realist position that the solaristic system will build some of its claims, analyzing what exactly the puzzling idea of *photographic reproduction of reality through film* means (ontologically). Pasolini claims, "The cinema is a language [in Italian 'linguaggio' and not 'lingua'], which expresses reality with reality"⁸⁸ and would thus function as a system of signs

of the passing reality, and, as these are characteristic of the reality, we have only to string them on a becoming, abstract, uniform and invisible, situated at the back of the apparatus of knowledge, in order to imitate what there is that is characteristic in this becoming itself. (...) We may therefore sum up what we have been saying in the conclusion that the *mechanism of our ordinary knowledge is of a cinematographical kind*." (Cf. Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, pp. 305-306)

⁸⁷ "(...) *Dynamisierung des Raumes* und entsprechend als *Verräumlichung der Zeit*." (Cf. Erwin Panofsky, *Stil und Medium im Film*, p. 25; translation mine – C.R.)

⁸⁸ Pier Paolo Pasolini, *op. cit.*, p. 29

of reality itself – yet beyond any symbolic filter: “There is no symbolic or conventional filter between me and reality, as there is in literature.”⁸⁹

Yet these realist positions share a clumsy definition of the term “reality” and are delimiting its dimension to outer physical reality. We have already received several indications that the understanding of reality is conditioning our enquiry, based on a paradoxical interrogation: How can we describe the reproduction of something, which is already hard to grasp in its fundamental nature? And above all, how can we call something a *reproduction*, which has an effect on us very similar to our perception of reality, but which escapes representation as it is a *re*-presentation, although not a double? What of reality is exactly reproduced by film? In the second part of this analysis, within a separate section, I will exclusively focus on this question and thereby delineate the underlying understanding of reality of the solaristic system by evoking some positions of speculative realism.

A special claim on film as well as on technology is designed by Walter Benjamin, who comments on film in one single, yet famous essay, “The Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproduction” (1936). Like Epstein’s approach, also Benjamin’s analysis of cinema escapes the categorical distinction of reality versus unreality of film. According to Benjamin the most important question on the nature of cinema is how it affects us, how it has changed reality and/or our relation to reality. Cinema is the reproduction of reality (which is a realist position), but it does so by taking slices of reality from the inside, then assembling its pieces. This “reality montage” of cinema, is just a new way of aesthetic perception, which I will call ‘*cine-perception*’⁹⁰, an assemblage of reality, giving access to what Benjamin calls “immediate reality”⁹¹ composed by the very elements of reality obtained by “permeation of reality with mechanical equipment”⁹².

Not only has this cine-perception transformed completely the nature of

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 29

⁹⁰ The terms “reality montage” and “cine-perception” are my interpretative resumé of Benjamin’s main concepts.

⁹¹ Walter Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 233

⁹² Ibid., p. 234

art, it also has changed our relation towards reality. According to Benjamin, this transformation is grounded on the emergence of those new media which rely on mass reproduction, enabled by the intervention of technological equipment, the *apparatus*, particularly photography and, above all, cinema.⁹³ Benjamin points out that the traditional contemplative and individual perception is replaced with the collective and distracted perception on which cinema rests. In parallel the traditional cult value of the artwork is successively suppressed by its growing exhibition value⁹⁴: “With the different methods of technical reproduction of a work of art, its fitness for exhibition increased to such an extent that the quantitative shift between its two poles turned into a qualitative transformation of its nature⁹⁵. The emergence of this new kind of artworks brings the masses closer to reality (Benjamin actually says: “to bring things ‘closer’ spatially and humanly”⁹⁶). Furthermore, due to the permanent possibility of mass reproduction, any fact or event has lost its authenticity and uniqueness⁹⁷, just as the work of art has lost its “aura”.

Benjamin demonstrates in detail all the possible changes, which the loss of aura evokes for the realm of art and aesthetic perception. However, the implicit consequence for the human relation to reality is of special importance for our scope of analysis. Reality itself has lost its authenticity through the emergence of cinema. Reality is in permanent competition to a potential *other reality*, the filmed one, which pretends to be a reality free of

⁹³ “Earlier much futile thought had been devoted to the question of whether photography is an art. The primary question – whether the very invention of photography had not transformed the entire nature of art – was not raised. Soon the film theoreticians asked the same ill-considered question with regard to the film. But the difficulties which photography caused traditional aesthetics were mere child’s play as compared to those raised by the film.” (Cf. *ibid.*, 227)

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 225

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 225

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 223

⁹⁷ “(...) the desire of the present-day masses to bring things ‘closer’ to things spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality [Überwindung des Einmaligen in der Gegebenheit] by accepting its reproduction.” (Cf. *ibid.*, p. 223)

any technical equipment and with a huge impact on the masses: the access to “immediate reality”. As a result, the non-filmed reality loses its unique reality status, and switches to be just any possible reality among many others filmed realities. This *virtualization of reality*, which anticipates that which later is designated by Deleuze with “cinematic consciousness”⁹⁸ and “the world as metacinema” (actually a Bergsonian proposal famously quoted by Deleuze), is another implication of the solaristic system: on the planet Solaris, we are facing reality, which at the end, as we might discover, may have been a virtual one from the very beginning, a meta-reality out of the Bergsonian metacinema. Somehow Benjamin’s argumentation supports the idea of a shift of perspective for human thought through cinema, giving it a political sense: “The adjustment of reality to the masses and of the masses to reality is a process of unlimited scope as much for thinking as for perception.”⁹⁹

2. The Breakthrough of Philosophy of Film

In the 1970ies Stanley Cavell has pioneered to regard film as an explicit issue of philosophical concern. Some of his general reflections on the ontology of film will be considered throughout this treatise as crucial to the constitution of the solaristic system.¹⁰⁰

We already have referred to Cavell’s position that “film is made for philosophy” and its implication for our scope of analysis. Yet in his further

⁹⁸ I argue here that it is possible to compare Gilles Deleuze’s concept of “cinematic consciousness” (which originally is the consciousness of the camera and the plan) to a fusion of Epstein’s thinking of film and what I have called Benjamin’s concept of cine-perception.

⁹⁹ Walter Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 223

¹⁰⁰ In the area of philosophy of film, Cavell is until today one of the most quoted and referred authors within the English-speaking world. As one of the few American examples there are, Cavell tries to reconcile American pragmatism and transcendentalism with continental philosophy (referring to authors like Kant, Heidegger, Derrida, Wittgenstein).

reflections on the nature of film Cavell invokes those realists of film theory who evince an ontological concern; he gives a special emphasis to André Bazin's "Ontology of the Photographic Image" adopting the claim of the origin of film in photography. By reassessing Bazin from the point of view of philosophy, Cavell raises questions on the ontological status of film and on the reproduced reality that film projects: "What happens to reality when it is projected and screened?"¹⁰¹ He is thereby concerned with the spectator's point of view and defines "the material basis of the medium" as "*a succession of automatic world projections*"¹⁰². This main concern leads Cavell to an epistemological inquiry into skepticism. Hence he claims "film is a moving image of skepticism"¹⁰³ because "movies convince us of the world's reality in the only way we have to be convinced (...): by taking views of it."¹⁰⁴ In this sense, the human inquiry into the physical world and to the world of movies disquiets Cavell profoundly. He argues that these two worlds are intertwined as the fantasy of the spectator drives the perception of both, "the world is *already* drawn by fantasy"^{105 106}.

Furthermore, Cavell is often called a post-structuralist interested in the quotidian and trivial of both language and cinema. In his writings on the philosophy of film, he focuses exclusively on Hollywood entertainment films. While analyzing concrete examples Cavell creates an emancipated dialogue between philosophy and film: the latter does not exemplify but explain and even deepen aspects of philosophy. Inversely, Cavell uses philosophy as a tool to better understand the essential features and aesthetics of film.

¹⁰¹ Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.*, p. 16

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 72

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 188-189

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 102

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 102

¹⁰⁶ This position of Cavell reminds Hugo Münsterberg's "The Photoplay – A Psychological Study" (1916) in which the perception of film and of reality are compared to each other, both described as relying on the principles of attention, memory and imagination. Yet on the contrary to Münsterberg's psychological approach (film reflects not the world but the mind and is specially apt to create emotions), this reliance on fantasy is for Cavell the evidence that film convinces us "of the world's reality".

Throughout this coining reassessment of film in the context of philosophy, Cavell enhances the *self-reflexivity of the medium* and even names it as a criterion of significance:

...The kinds of revelation of the medium I expect to find in any significant film – a significant film being one precisely on the basis of which such revelations of the medium are most significantly made. (...) The aesthetic significance of a given film is a function of the way in which and degree to which it reveals or acknowledges this fact of its origin in the medium of film.¹⁰⁷

I have taken this proposition of self-reflexivity as a premise for the proposal to ground an entire ontology of film on one single movie, to explore how far a film's aesthetic significance can go for what has been delineated so far. In the case of the chosen film, Tarkovsky's "Solaris", all the important aesthetic principles match the frame. After reading the outline of "Solaris" and reproducing the movie in front of one's inner eye, one could argue that this film is philosophically rich, and a philosophical interpretation is worth the effort, but to make it the foundation of an ontology of film would be an overvaluation. I think I have already given plenty of arguments, yet the main argument remains: that not only do I base my solaristic philosophy on the self-reflexivity of film. I argue that "Solaris" itself doubles and catalyzes this self-reflexivity: the film uses, tells, shows and develops the aesthetic principles of film in a density, hence is of a special significance. I expect new insights on the named ontological features/ topics of philosophical thought, which I have formerly divided into three groups, based on Epstein and Cavell. I recall the list of antagonistic pairs:

- Appearance and reality, image and reality, presence and absence, the existence and inexistence of any reality, being and nothing, actors and characters, matter and mind, objects and perception, subject and object, world and thought, continuity and discontinuity, movement and stasis, nature of space and time, life and death.

¹⁰⁷ Stanley Cavell, *Cavell on Film*, p. 119

Each pair stands for the self-reflexivity of film and has its place in the solaristic system, as we will see throughout and with a special emphasis in the conclusions.

A different idea of the medium's self-reflexivity has been introduced by the second crucial philosopher of film, Gilles Deleuze, who advances in France with proper consequences for philosophy through film. Deleuze had surprised many of his followers, when in the 1980s he came up with a systematic attempt to integrate film into philosophy by investigating how cinema produces concepts, which change our perception and relation to the external world(s) and to reality. He thereby designs an intrinsic relation between film and thought, which is reminiscent of Epstein's position, for whom, as previously mentioned, cinema is a *time-thinking machine*. Curiously, both Epstein and Deleuze are influenced by the theory of knowledge of Henri Bergson's philosophy of time.

For Deleuze, cinematic consciousness goes beyond film (in the sense that the world becomes a film) and the identification of cine-thinking is driven by the philosophical need for a renewal of philosophy itself, by looking for "new philosophical expression"¹⁰⁸ through film. Deleuze's positions are prefigured, on side with Jean Epstein, by the writings of French film critics like Serge Daney and Pascal Bonitzer or Jean-Louis Schefer; Schefer has written philosophically on cinema from the spectator's point of view. Further, Deleuze joins Pasolini in his critique of Metz's semiology of film. In opposition to Metz, Pasolini argues for a common protolanguage of reality and film: "the first and foremost of the human languages can be considered to be action itself"¹⁰⁹ and its smallest entities "the objects, forms, and acts of reality that we perceive with our senses"¹¹⁰, designated as *kinemes*.

Yet in difference to Stanley Cavell, Deleuze relies in his two volumes "The Movement-Image – Cinema 1" and "The Time-Image – Cinema 2"

¹⁰⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. xxi

¹⁰⁹ Pier Paolo Pasolini, p. 198

¹¹⁰ Ibid., *Heretical Empericism*, p. 200

mainly on artistic and avant-garde movies. Furthermore, and in similarity to Cavell, his main theoretical references are not to be found in the theory of film, but in the realm of philosophy. Deleuze mainly reassesses the epistemology of Henri Bergson, who preconditions the concepts of “movement-image” and “time-image” and further dissolves the difference between image and matter.

As a second important reference Deleuze evokes the semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce, who has presented the photographic image as *indexical*. Both philosophers, Peirce and Bergson have reacted to the very beginning of photography and film in the 19th Century; they have immediately started to integrate the reflection about these media in the realm of philosophy. Their writings have somehow anticipated the significance of cinema for philosophical thought. Deleuze reassesses Bergson’s claim of a metacinematic universe: “The material universe, the plane of immanence, is the *machinic assemblage of movement-images*. Here Bergson is startlingly ahead of his time: it is the universe as cinema in itself, a metacinema.”¹¹¹

In parallel to philosophy of film, the branch of philosophy of technology has been developing, and builds on authors such as Walter Benjamin or Gilbert Simondon. (Deleuze appropriates from the latter further concepts like becoming and individuation, singularity, the crystalline or the membrane, which are identifiable in the cinema books.) Philosophy of technology has been inquiring into the techno-ontological condition of man, whether critically (like Heidegger) or with enthusiasm (like Benjamin). But such a techno-ontological condition, I argue, has been envisioned by cinema in the sense of an image-creating-machine, raising a new kind of techno-consciousness. As we have mentioned before, Jean Epstein, had already theorized about a thinking machine or robot, and referred to “the intelligence of a machine”, “mechanical philosophy”¹¹² or even cinematic thinking as a robotic machine-thought - the consciousness of a machine in form of technological images. What do these images mean to us, the non-machines?

¹¹¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*, p. 61

¹¹² Jean Epstein, *The Intelligence of a Machine*, p. 61

It might be elucidating in this context to consider the following idea: Slavoj Žižek points out that Heidegger's term to designate technology ("Technik" in German) *Gestell* - in English *frame* - is to be understood as an attitude towards the world:

When Heidegger speaks about the 'essence of technology', he has in mind something like the frame of a fundamental fantasy, which, as a transparent background, structures the way we relate to reality. *Gestell*, Heidegger's word for the essence of technology, is usually translated into English as 'enframing'. At its most radical, technology does not designate a complex network of machines and activities, but the *attitude towards reality* which we assume when we are engaged in such activities: technology is the way reality discloses itself to us in contemporary times. The paradox of technology as the concluding moment of Western metaphysics is that it is a mode of enframing which poses a danger to enframing itself: the human being reduced to an object of technological manipulation is no longer properly human; it loses the very feature of being ecstatically open to reality.¹¹³

Žižek chooses a highly cinematic vocabulary: enframing of reality, a technological attitude towards reality, *in which man loses access to reality by himself*. Applied to our context, film is to be regarded as an example of such a technological medium to structure the way of how we relate to reality and to determine the way how reality presents itself to us; therefore we can compare technology to the *world as metacinema*, which is such an "attitude towards reality". The *world as metacinema* would be then a consequence of Heidegger's *Gestell* but conversely we can speak of a new techno-ontological condition envisioned by film (together with photography or any audio-visual reproduction of reality).

Deleuze has indirectly taken this position and named some of its ontological consequences, namely *cinematographic consciousness*, an own state of relating with the universe provided by film in which "We are no longer faced with subjective or objective images; we are caught in a correlation

¹¹³ Slavoj Žižek, *Event – Philosophy in Transit*, pp. 30-31

between a perception-image and a camera consciousness which transforms it.”¹¹⁴ This idea constitutes “a pure form”, “beyond the subjective and the objective”, and has been developed by Deleuze departing from Pasolini’s free indirect image. Cinematographic consciousness is a frame of reality, it is the consciousness of the film itself.

To Deleuze, film then is in a special way relevant to creating new philosophical expression: “the search for a new means of philosophical expression (...) must be pursued today in relation to the renewal of certain other arts, such as the theatre or cinema.”¹¹⁵ But what is exactly so special about *cine-thinking* for philosophy, why does cinema have this power for renovation? “The cinema provokes us to see, to feel, to sense, and finally to think *differently*” writes Flaxman about Deleuze’s endeavor, which enables us to deterritorialize “the cogito, the rigid ‘image of thought’” of classical philosophy. But how? For Deleuze filmmakers invent “blocks of movement-duration”:

If I say, you do cinema, what are you doing? (...) I just say that you invent, but not concepts, that is not your business, that you invent that which could be called blocks of movement-duration.¹¹⁶

What happens then between these blocks of movement duration in confrontation with philosophy? How do they come to be integrated into philosophy with the power of change? I think that Deleuze claims a self-renewal of philosophy, because philosophy has to accomplish a translation

¹¹⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *op. cit.*, p. 76

¹¹⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. xxi

¹¹⁶ Translated by the author from the French original: “Je dis que je fais de la philosophie, c’est à dire, j’essaie d’inventer des concepts. J’essaie pas de réfléchir sur autre chose. Si je dis, vous qui faites du cinéma, qu’est-ce que vous faites ? (...) Je dirai juste ce que vous inventez, ce n’est pas des concepts, ce n’est pas votre affaire, ce que vous inventez c’est ce que l’on pourrait appeler des blocs de mouvements-durée. (...) Je peux dire que la peinture invente, (...) supposons que ce soit des blocs de lignes-couleurs.” (Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Qu’est-ce que l’acte de creation? – Conférence donnée dans le cadre des mardis de la fondation Femis – 17/05/1987*, available online)

work, translating the blocks of movement-duration into concepts, which are the concepts of cinema:

A theory of cinema is not 'about' cinema, but about concepts that cinema gives rise to and which are themselves related to other concepts (...) The theory of cinema does not bear on the cinema but on the concepts of the cinema, which are no less practical, effective or existent than cinema itself.¹¹⁷

Yet Deleuze's philosophy of film is inseparable from his broader project as a philosopher; therefore the reader would have trouble understanding the two volumes on cinema without knowing some basic concepts of Deleuzian thought: the plane of immanence, the rhizome, the sensory thinking and the idea of the image of thought, a concept he creates from classical philosophy before introducing the images of film and the thought of film. A more detailed immersion into the Deleuzian universe would exceed the scope of our analysis at this point. This prerequisite expertise on Deleuze's thought has contributed to the fact that it took over ten years before Deleuze's writing on cinema was seriously appreciated in the realms of philosophy and theory of film. Nonetheless, nowadays the field of interpretation and continuation has been growing and the Deleuzian film-philosophy and the hypothesis of cine-thinking has become established as something of its own kind.

A whole branch has been established, busy with commenting on Gilles Deleuze's cinema books. "Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine" (1997) by D.N. Rodowick and "The brain is the screen" (2000) edited by Gregory Flaxman are to be mentioned as the first systematic attempts of film-philosophical reception in the English-speaking world, long overdue. D.N. Rodowick highlights how difficult it was for Deleuze's book on cinema to be received in American film-theory, evoking one question: "why does Deleuze turn to cinema to address questions of image, movement, and time raised in his earlier books?"¹¹⁸ Assessing this position, Flaxman clearly situates the

¹¹⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-image*, p. 280

¹¹⁸ D.N. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1997, p. xviii

meaning of Deleuze's endeavor to integrate film into philosophy as a need of renewal for philosophy itself:

Whatever their intricacies and digressions, *The Movement-Image* and *The Time-Image* fundamentally contend that, beyond all other arts, the cinema opens the possibility for deterritorializing the cogito, the rigid 'image of thought' that in one form or another has dominated Western philosophy. The cinema provokes us to see, to feel, to sense, and finally to think *differently*, and while this induces Deleuze to write his two volumes, those volumes in turn compel us to return to the cinema, to see its images in the light of our own captivity for the rituals of representation, the philosophical-narrative program we have been running.¹¹⁹

Deleuze's project has often been underestimated in the realm of philosophy and has evoked controversial reactions, as the question of faith was seen as esoteric, and the claim of salvation as even pretentious: how can philosophy be renewed or even saved by something, which is situated outside philosophy?

In any case, many contemporary receptors of Deleuze's film philosophy seem to ignore this claim of his books on film, the renovation or salvation of philosophy. They are not busy with saving philosophy, but rather with understanding, interpreting, applying, appropriating and even expanding Gilles Deleuze's concept of film to contemporary cinema. One of the best and most substantial examples of further development of Deleuzian thought is Patricia Pisters' concept of the neuro-image, which is endeavoured to describe the image of film after the Deleuzian time-image.

¹¹⁹ Gregory Flaxman, "Introduction", in: *The Brain Is The Screen*, p. 3

3. Recent Positions

Cavell and Deleuze have laid the foundation for philosophy of film and until today their efforts have to be mentioned within any further attempt. The solaristic system ambitions to step out of the projects of these two philosophers for film, although referring to them; and like them it intends to make philosophy of film a project for philosophy. In general, since the beginning of the new millennium the entanglement of film and philosophy has been growing and even become a fashion. In consequence, philosophy of film has been established as an academic (sub)discipline in the field of aesthetics and philosophy of art especially in the United States (relying on Cavell) and as a branch of studies for Deleuzian scholars in France and worldwide.

Many continental philosophers nowadays rely on film to illustrate philosophical problems, and film theorists have increasingly searched for a philosophical interpretation of movies and alerted to their philosophical potential. Against this background, the creation of the solaristic system intends to draw a consequence from the fact that films are a form of doing philosophy, within the realm of philosophy. It goes beyond the mere repetition of that thesis taking *Solaris* as a mere example of it. Instead, the solaristic system is to be understood as a contribution to the old and ongoing debate on the nature of reality, disclosing new insights only possible through philosophy of film and by treating “*Solaris*” as a work of philosophy.

In what ways has cinema altered the discipline of philosophy? The solaristic system presupposes Deleuze’s ambition to renew philosophy and to engage the concepts of film and transfer them into philosophy. Yet instead of using a catalogue of film examples as Deleuze and many film philosophers do, the solaristic approach relies on one special movie alone, which significantly catalyzes the self-reflexivity of film. The solaristic system is the proposal to appropriate principles of thought and concepts to be engaged with from this movie and to base a philosophical system on them, meta-fictional in its expression, philosophical in its character.

To continue the main line: In parallel to Deleuze and the late Cavell

some new aspects on the spectral nature of film have been raised in France by Jean-Louis Leutrat and also by Jacques Derrida, who curiously proclaims his position while being a character in the film "Ghost Dance": "I am a ghost"¹²⁰. Both defend the haunted character of film, emphasizing film's death-driven and spectral essence: film shows that which has already passed.

The most recent and structured impact on the area of philosophy and film comes from the Anglo-Saxon world. Noël Carroll has advanced from an analytical viewpoint a definition of the ontology of film and further given a *non-essentialist* definition of film, questioning the earlier "creationist" and "realist" approaches; in the latter Carroll includes Cavell, whose agreeable positions he carefully summarizes in three main relevant points: "1) that film enables us to escape the burden of response; 2) that film overcomes subjectivity; and 3) that film relieves the anxiety of solipsism"¹²¹, the latter opening "the possibility of the world existing independently of my mind"¹²². Although Carroll can appreciate these points, he refutes Cavell's claim of the photographic image as an essential feature of film because we now have films with entirely computer-generated sequences; therefore, according to Carroll, the difference between painting and photography has to be defined again. As the solaristic philosophy of film reassesses the realist position, a closer look to Carroll's refutation is appropriate.

Instead of the realist approach, Carroll proposes that cinema is able "to convey moving fictions visually"¹²³, thus including animation and digitally produced films in this statement. He recognizes that the realist argument concerning the essence of film has been "one of the most enduring", yet points out: "audiences are not looking for reality at the movies, but something

¹²⁰ *Ghost Dance* is a 1983 British film directed by Ken McMullen. The film is centered on Derrida, who claims his position of an hauntology of film, characterizing ghosts as *presence of absents*.

¹²¹ Noël Carroll, "Introduction", in: *Philosophy of Film and Motion Pictures - An Anthology*, p. 54

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 55

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 57

unreal”¹²⁴. Even so, Carroll discards the dream hypothesis: “We know next to nothing about dreams. Indeed, we probably know more about films and filmmaking than we know about dreams and dream-making”¹²⁵. Carroll also criticizes the third frequent hypothesis, the “film-as-language motif”¹²⁶, as being too metaphorical, as film is generated in images, not in words.

He therefore proposes to get free of “the film as something else approach”¹²⁷ and defends film as moving images, although this definition problematically encompasses something broader than film: it includes video and computer generated images, which all indicate something else than what we usually understand by film. Carroll’s positions have been appreciated, and raised worldwide discussion, mainly in the field of analytical philosophy. His method essentially consists in addressing and inquiring into the most different hypothesis of defining film, including his own. Yet Carroll also addresses common sense or practical questions relating philosophy and film, such as the ones regarding the objectivity or truth of documentaries, or whether film can be philosophy or not; he also addresses topics concerning film cultures like “the cinematic” or the praxis of filmmaking, as well as the difference between movies in general and artistic or avant-garde films.

I agree with Carroll that we should give up any attempts “to define film as something else”, yet I have to admit that the solaristic approach tries to define film ‘as reality’ although not in that simple way. It rather inverts the strain of argumentation: film is made of the *reproduction* of reality, so by analyzing film, we can come to new conclusions about the nature of reality. I further do not think, that Carroll’s reference to digitally transformed and computer generated images weakens the argument that the film image relies on the photographic image. Even if nowadays we have movies, which are composed of such computer-generated images, those try to imitate the photographic image, to imitate the reproduction of reality; painting has already had the means to paint naturalistically “like photography” before

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 57

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 60

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 60

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 61

photography's invention (even if in the last century it could get freed of such a doctrine). When movies show "unreal" things like unknown planets, parallel worlds, monsters or dinosaurs, they use computer-generated imagery, trying to make them *real*: in film we look for extraordinary, impactful experiences which are in continuity with our world. Unreal objects become even more powerful, if they convey the *real of reality*. It does thereby not matter if they are a real reproduction or only pretend to be a reproduction of reality. Also we have to object to Cavell that film design and film architecture has already created non-realist scenarios since the very beginnings of film. The attempts of German expressionism (for example the 1920 film "Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari" – "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari") to use scenarios, which actually look like modern non-realistic paintings (such as cubist or expressionist ones) have been quickly abandoned. Murnau has discovered with the making of "Nosferatu" that the uncanny and horrible only is effective when it comes within a realistic approach, embedded in a realist world.

A different film-philosophical approach is proposed by Stephen Mulhall, who has advocated for a controversial position, namely that philosophy is actually put into praxis through movies: "films are not philosophy's raw material, nor a source for its ornamentation; they are philosophical exercises, philosophy in action – film as philosophizing."¹²⁸ Mulhall's position goes beyond that of Deleuze, who concedes to film the possibility of cine-thinking but keeps a certain distance from the idea of film as philosophy: cinema thinks by its own means, and philosophy picks up the concepts of cinema, integrating them into philosophical thought.

Mulhall has observed a self-reflexivity of the films he investigates; a self-reflexivity, which sets films as a form of philosophy of film, since they reflect upon the cinematic medium:

These questions, about the nature of the cinematic medium, are perhaps those which we might expect any philosophical book on film to address – they

¹²⁸ Stephen Mulhall, *On Film*, p. 4

are what is typically referred to when philosophers refer to ‘the philosophy of film’; (...) these films (...) themselves address such questions – because (...) in their reflections on human embodiment, they find themselves reflecting upon what makes it possible for them to engage in such reflections, upon the conditions for the possibility of film. In other words, a fundamental part of the philosophical work of these films is best understood as philosophy of film.¹²⁹

To conclude this section, I want to recapitulate that we have two different approaches to philosophy of film: the anglophone and the European, whereby the French and the Deleuzian thinking plays a special role. Yet the anglophone, analytically coined branch widely ignores any of the French or Deleuzian reflection. I will not resolve this underlying conflict nor is it the purpose of my thesis to do so; therefore I have decided to regard the different approaches as parallel streams, distinct from each other. In any case, we can say that the analytically influenced, mainly anglophone approach is more concerned with a definition of the essential features of film, and how films are a kind of philosophizing in praxis (one of the recent popular examples is “Filmosophy” by Daniel Frampton, who actually defends *filmosophizing*), than with thinking about the consequences of film for philosophy and how to intertwine concepts of philosophy and film.

The anglophone school seems convinced that philosophical concerns are to be clearly grasped through words and are determined by a dominant logic of linear thought in English language. The analytical approach usually refers as little as possible to continental philosophy or to anything outside its strictly defined scope, with some exceptions, whereby philosophers like Heidegger or Plato are recurrent names. Deleuze, as the opposite extreme, presents a baroque and rhizomatic thinking, full of entangled links and cross-references in order to sustain the constant creation of new nuances and concepts, to keep philosophy inspired by a flow of philosophical consciousness, to let it breath organically and multilayered. Indeed, for Deleuze, philosophy is a creative endeavor by itself; the creation of concepts can take entangled inspiration from any other creative act, like art or cinema or literature, and may

¹²⁹ Ibid., p.5

touch areas, which are not necessarily graspable by words.

It is inevitable that the reflection upon the cinematic medium, which “Solaris” addresses, is the proof that, just in the sense Mulhall has mentioned, “Solaris” is a piece of philosophy of film. Furthermore the solaristic system is needed to engage the movie’s concepts for philosophy. Which kind of real of reality and which kind of truth does “Solaris” convey? Which consequences can we expect within the ontological and epistemological areas? What kind of thought and what kind of *being* (even if virtual) of both, the characters and the spectators, is made possible? These are the underlying guiding interrogations for starting the analysis that builds the solaristic system.

PART 2

SOLARISTIC TWISTS -

ON BEING, REALITY AND ITS

REPRODUCTION



SHORT PREVIEW

The philosophical reliance on a film or any kind of work of art is often underestimated as a device for reasoning; yet works of art can potentially turn out to be a unique tool of thought, especially in an area of the unutterable. This withdrawal from verbal intelligibility is the case when we ask for the real of reality in reproduction. In this first part of analysis I will gradually introduce this aforementioned real of reality for which *being-in-film* and *being-on-Solaris* become self-reflexive vehicles. I will gradually sketch this elusive *real*, which would become discernible through film; this *real* is present although absent in both reality and its reproduction, thereby reaching an area of *presence of absence* or *being without being*. I propose to develop this *presence of absence* as based on Heidegger's *presence of what is present*, and as one of the main self-reflexive principles of the movie "Solaris".

The movie functions in a metaphorical way, as a fictionally based model of explanation of reality, comparable to Plato's allegory of the cave: both examples are metaphors on reality and our access to it, yet somehow "Solaris" goes one step further for being not only a narrative, but as well a self-reflexive instance of what it describes and conceptually evokes. Plato's metaphor of imprisoned cave dwellers is *about* reality's elusive character and the danger of perceptual illusion. In „Solaris“ the events of Kris Kelvin meeting his own memories in materialized form *is symptomatic* for the unfolding of an unutterable real of reality present in reproduction in a double sense: as a narrative and as a medium presenting reality directly, going beyond any other

form of art: somehow *any film* in its characteristic of being a *film* can function as such an allegory, although of a different kind: not necessarily as a particular narrative, as it is the case of „Solaris“ (and some other movies presenting a self-reflexive narrative like „Matrix“ or „Inception“, to name well-known examples), but as a narrative *medium* of own characteristics: film does not represent reality, but *re-presents* it in a direct way.

The self-reflexivity of “Solaris” enables the solaristic system to unfold conceptually, processing the movie’s inherent aesthetic sentiments into an epistemic setting as principles of thought around the development of the concept of the real of reality, relying on a “transference of reality” (Bazin). This epistemic setting evolves a range of correlated concepts like being, reality, world, time, space, matter, image, light, transcendence, death, the (in)finite, the void and finally the Lacanian Real. All of them are fundamental to delve into the nature of both film and reality, in an ontological as well as epistemological perspective. Further they are characteristic key concepts of the narrative of the movie “Solaris”. Therefore, the wide range of philosophical subjects raised by this movie stand as self-reflexive for the ontological principles of film in general, and indicate an intrinsic relationship between philosophy and film. Film turns thus into that which the ontological realists of film theory propose: “reality without any symbolic filter” (Pasolini) or “immediate reality” (Benjamin). Such a setting expands the reflection on reality grounding the solaristic system as a new kind of multifold model, including reproduction as an ontological premise of the being of reality. In its ultimate consequence, this also means that the real of reality becomes the most essential feature for the attempt to define film in philosophical terms: the real is a kind of essence of reality disclosed by film. By arguing so, the solaristic proposal gradually develops into a philosophical structure attempting to deal with the realm of the real, which is proposed as a placeholder for ontological truth.

To sum up: the first steps of the solaristic system, the underlying understanding of reality and its reproduction in film will be conceptualized in this part of the analysis. Therefrom three different definitions of film will be gradually presented, fundamentally characterizing film’s entangled relation

with reality. Throughout they are explored and expanded as the fundamental principles of the solaristic philosophy. The three concepts are:

1. film as the catalyzer of a multifold model of reality
2. film as a non-human tool (technological apparatus) evoking epistemological change
3. film as an automatic reproduction of the real of reality

As suggested so far these concepts complement and condition each other. We cannot separate them; by analyzing one, we come via intra-active cross connections to the others. This way of reflecting on reality synthesizes different possibilities of entangled multiplicity. As both reproducer and continuator of reality, the filmic medium becomes a catalyzer, which makes the possibilities of reality manifold.

VIII.

WHAT HAPPENS TO REALITY IN FILM?

1. The Ontological Puzzle of *Being* in Reproduction

“What happens to reality when it is projected and screened?”¹³⁰ asks Stanley Cavell right at the beginning of *The World Viewed*. In the text preceding this question Cavell interprets the claims of André Bazin - “The cinema [is] of its essence a dramaturgy of Nature”¹³¹ - and of Erwin Panofsky - “The medium of the movies is physical reality as such”¹³² - as not to be taken literally, but rather as referring to film’s reliance on the photographic medium. Cavell thus says that the question of photography and film has to be a question of reality:

What Panofsky and Bazin have in mind is that the basis of the medium of movies is photographic, and that a photograph is *of* reality or nature. If to this we add that the medium is one in which the photographic image is projected

¹³⁰ Stanley Cavell, *The World Viewed*, p. 16

¹³¹ André Bazin, *op. cit.*, p. 110

¹³² Erwin Panofsky, “Style and Medium in the Moving Pictures”, in: *Film*, p. 31

and gathered on a screen, our question becomes: What happens to reality when it is projected and screened? ¹³³

To start with this inquiry on what happens to reality in film, let us try to inquire into this idea that “a photograph is *of* reality or nature”. What exactly does it mean, that a picture is *of* the same as that which it depicts, its model? Cavell certainly is right when he explains:

A photograph does not present us with ‘likeness’ of things; it presents us, we want to say, with the things themselves. But wanting to say that may well make us ontologically restless. ¹³⁴

What lies behind this ‘ontological restlessness’, which derives from the equalization of the thing itself with its photographic other or double? The equation must appear as a contradiction, because, these two, the thing and its photographic double, cannot be considered as identical; indeed, their equation must appear as a paradox. Cavell finds an elegant escape when he characterizes the problem of photography as provoking an ontological restlessness, further describing its connection to reality as a human limit of epistemic capacity of knowledge:

Such troubles in notating so obvious a fact suggest that we do not know what a photograph is; we do not know how to place it ontologically. We might say that we don’t know how to think of the *connection* between a photograph and what it is the photograph of. The image is not a likeness; it is not exactly a replica or a relict, or a shadow, or an apparition either, though all these natural candidates share a striking feature with photographs – an aura or history of magic surrounding them. ¹³⁵

However, Cavell has not attempted to describe, in terms other than “mysterious”, this characterization of the photographic image, ontologically a

¹³³ Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.*, p. 16

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 17 -18

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18

puzzle and a mystery, as well in epistemological terms. Cavell thereby aptly formulates the sense in which the photographic image is mysterious:

(T)he mysteriousness of the photograph lies not in the machinery which produces it, but in the unfathomable abyss between what it captures (its subject) and what is captured for us (*this* fixing of the subject), the metaphysical wait between exposure and exhibition, the absolute authority or finality of the fixed image.¹³⁶

It is this “unfathomable abyss” which we will try to understand better in what follows. Cavell starts his reflection relying on Bazin, claiming that Bazin would misspell the identity between the thing and its image in photography, when in truth wanting to call attention to the fact that we are *not* facing a *representation*. For Cavell it is obvious in this context, that the thing on the photographic image “is not actually present to us either (anyway, obviously not present with us) when it appears on the screen.”¹³⁷ But is that so, and is the problem, which Bazin raises, the one of a mere misspelling? To better approach this question I propose to look back at Bazin’s writing in detail. What does Bazin *exactly* claim about the relation between the photographic image and its model? I have already mentioned the proposal of interpretation of the claim “the photographic image *is* the model”¹³⁸, which will be elucidated in what follows.

I will hereby argue that Bazin’s assertion is to be understood *beyond* the indexical interpretation which has become established in film theory. A close regard on his formulations can cast some light onto the “mysterious” problem Cavell describes, exactly because Bazin does *not* emphasize a relation of indexicality when he sketches the perplexing relation between the photographic image and its model. In my view, the widespread indexical interpretation relies on a kind of misunderstanding, which goes back to the English translation of Bazin’s writing. Actually Bazin’s ontology of the

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 185

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 166

¹³⁸ André Bazin, *op. cit.*, p. 14

photographic image was for the first time understood as an indexical reading by Peter Wollen in 1969, two years after the English translation of Hugh Gray. Wollen refers Bazin in the context of semiology, grounding on Peirce's indexical class of signs, drawing a physical connection between objects and their photographic representation: "we know that in certain aspects they are exactly like the objects they represent"¹³⁹. Wollen thereby claims that Bazin's "conclusions are remarkably close to those of Peirce"¹⁴⁰ and points out:

Time and again Bazin speaks of photography in terms of a mold, a death-mask, a Veronica, the Holy Shroud of Turin, a relic, an imprint. Thus Bazin speaks of "the lesser plastic arts, the molding of death-masks for example, which likewise involves a certain automatic process. One might consider photography in this sense as a molding, the taking of an impression, by the manipulation of light."¹⁴¹

The English translation of Bazin quoted here by Wollen has dropped the word reproduction, to be found in the French original. "Un certain automatisme dans la reproduction"¹⁴² has been translated into English by Gray as quoted above: "a certain automatic process"¹⁴³. Yet in truth Bazin names here what he is interested in: the automatic *reproduction* of the dead one and not just any process. The word reproduction designates a specific kind of process. This dropping is a symptomatic example for the change of meaning that the English translation provokes, thus favoring Wollen's indexical understanding.

Let us look closer at the context of Wollen's quote of Bazin. In order to engage photography as an imprint, Wollen has actually quoted a *footnote* of

¹³⁹ Charles Sanders Peirce, *What is a Sign?* (1894), quoted by Peter Wollen, *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, p. 103

¹⁴⁰ Peter Wollen, *op.cit.*, p. 105

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 105

¹⁴² André Bazin, *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?*, p. 12

¹⁴³ The whole Bazinian footnote quoted by Wollen says in the French original: "Il y aurait lieu cependant d'étudier la psychologie de genres plastiques mineurs, comme le moulage de masques mortuaires qui présentent, eux aussi, un certain automatisme dans la reproduction. En ce sens on pouvait considérer la photographie comme un moulage, une prise d'empreinte de l'objet par le truchement de la lumière." (Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 12)

Bazin, meant to complement an observation on photography as a “psychological fact”. Thereby, for Bazin, “the solution is not to be found in the result achieved but in the way of achieving it [our underlining].”¹⁴⁴ This reinforces the reading that Bazin’s emphasis lies not in the obtained “imprint” (Wollen), but in the way of automatic *reproduction* it has been achieved: “le moulage de masques mortuaires qui présentent, eux aussi, un certain automatisme dans la reproduction”¹⁴⁵ says Bazin.

I therefore will argue that Gray’s translation reduces the ontological dimension of Bazin’s proposal as well as its philosophical complexity. This will be clarified even further through the example I will give in what follows. The reason behind Gray’s translation might have been theoretical simplification, because the philosopheme presented by Bazin appears as paradoxical as Cavell has observed – “the model *is* the image”, whereas the indexical interpretation cannot provoke any kind of “ontological restlessness”, therefore stands against that which Cavell emphasizes on Bazin.

Let me consider again Bazin’s way of argumentation. In the French version he starts with the following affirmation:

L’objectif seul nous donne de l’objet une image capable de ‘défouler’, du fond de notre inconscient, ce besoin de substituer à l’objet mieux qu’un décalque approximatif [our underlining – C.R.].¹⁴⁶

This statement says, that only the photographic lens can satisfy our profound need to *substitute* the (depicted) object in a *better way* than an ‘approximative decal’. It means the photographic lens gives us *something more* than a decal, as the latter is merely approximate. This something more is not named. Yet Gray’s translation suggests the opposite: he names the something more as the decal, which already is “more than a mere approximation”; and therefore it

¹⁴⁴ André Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, p. 12. In the French original: “la satisfaction complète de notre appétit d’illusion par une reproduction mécanique dont l’homme est exclu. La solution n’était pas dans le résultat mais dans la genèse.” (Cf. André Bazin, *Qu’est-ce que le cinéma?*, p. 12)

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 12

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 14

would satisfy the deep human need for the substitution of the object. Let me quote his translation:

Only a photographic lens can give us the kind of image of the object that is capable of satisfying the deep need man has to substitute for it something more than a mere approximation, a kind of decal or transfer [our underlining – C.R.].¹⁴⁷

Indeed, this English translation can give ground for an indexical reading of Bazin's argumentation, which is not emphasized in the French original where Bazin in fact asserts that the photographic image must be *more* than an approximate decal. And this he says immediately before he claims that "*the photographic image is the model*" – "*elle est le modèle*"¹⁴⁸. This clearly favors my reading that Bazin's emphasis lies on the word *being*.

Yet what does it mean – to *be* the model? This sentence, in English and quoted out of context, wrongly evokes identity of the object and its photographic existence. Rather it is to consider the problem which Cavell emphasizes by reflecting further on Bazin: "The photographic mystery is that you can know both the appearance and the reality, but that nevertheless the one is unpredictable from the other."¹⁴⁹

However, if Cavell had considered the French original of Bazin, would he have taken into consideration that the English version reduces and hides the full meaning of the question of the *being* of the photographic image, which cannot be found elsewhere as in the ontological status of being itself? I ask this because in my view it is exactly this ontological status of the *being* of the photographic image which matters for analysis. Thereby, only philosophy, not film theory, has the tools to reflect on being itself and its ontological meaning, and only philosophy can then regard the ontological and epistemological status of the being of the photograph. Since philosophical analysis is a rather recent way to look at film, translator Gray may have wanted to prepare a way

¹⁴⁷ André Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, p. 14

¹⁴⁸ André Bazin, *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?*, p. 14

¹⁴⁹ Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-186

for film theory to deal with the question without having to confront this kind of complexity of natural language, apparently evoking insurmountable paradoxes.

Regarding what has been said throughout this chapter, I propose in what follows, to center my analysis on the question of *being through film*. It is rather my proposal that by further reflection on the *being of film*, we can describe the reproducibility as a *property of being* - instead of designating this property as an “unfathomable abyss” between the thing and its reproduction. It is this claim I will try to explain further.

2. The Being of Reality

Obviously it has not been the intention of Bazin to reflect on the ontological meaning of being and its conceptual entanglement with reality or its reproduction; that would clearly have transcended his intentions, consisting in the attempt to define film for a mere *theoretical* use, and not to unfold its *philosophical* complexity. Yet Bazin has unexpectedly been stepping into the realm of the most complex questions of ontology and epistemology without noticing. Therefore, in defining the ontological status of the being of the photographic image, from a philosophical point of view, *being itself is at stake*.

By reassessing the ontological sense of the *being of the model* present in Bazin’s original text, an unexpected ontological quality of being comes along, namely its infinite *shareability* in reproduction. Where does this reproducibility of being in form of the image come from? How can being be reproduced and how does it so through the image? Bazin evokes at the origin of the photographic image, and of art in general, the Egyptian mummy “as a defense against the passage of time”:

The religion of ancient Egypt, aimed against death, saw survival as depending on the continued existence of the corporeal body. Thus, by

providing a defense against the passage of time is satisfied a basic psychological need in man, for death is but the victory of time. To preserve, artificially, his bodily appearance is to snatch it from the flow of time, to stow it away neatly, so to speak, in the hold of life.¹⁵⁰

The power of photography to stop time and of film to reproduce it indicates that something of the nature of being is to be shared; something which unfolds in time, but affects us through the photographic image in a special way, different from all the other arts: namely by the instrumental and automatic intervention of “a non-living agent” (reminding the apparatus conception of Walter Benjamin in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*) that transfers reality “from the thing to its reproduction”.

For the first time, between the originating object and its reproduction there intervenes only the instrumentality of a non-living agent. For the first time an image of the world is formed automatically, (...). All the arts are based on the presence of man, only photography derives an advantage from his absence. The production by automatic means has radically affected our psychology of the image (...) we are forced to accept as real the existence of the object reproduced, actually *re-presented*, set before us, that is to say, in time and space. Photography enjoys a certain advantage in virtue of this transference of reality from the thing to its reproduction.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ André Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, p. 9. The French original as follows: “La religion égyptienne dirigée tout entière contre la mort, faisait dépendre la survie de la pérennité matérielle du corps. Elle satisfaisait par là à un besoin fondamental de la psychologie humaine: la défense contre le temps. La mort n’est que la victoire du temps. Fixer artificiellement les apparences charnelles de l’être c’est l’arracher au fleuve de la durée: l’arrimer à la vie.” (Cf. André Bazin, *Qu’est-ce que le cinéma?*, p.9)

¹⁵¹ André Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, p. 13-14. The French original as follows: “Cette genèse automatique a bouleversé radicalement la psychologie de l’image. L’objectivité de la photographie lui confère une puissance de crédibilité absente de toute oeuvre picturale. Quelles que soient les objections de notre esprit critique nous sommes obligés de croire à l’existence de l’objet représenté, effectivement *re-présenté*, c’est-à-dire rendu présent dans le temps et dans l’espace. La photographie bénéficie d’un transfert de réalité de la chose sur sa reproduction.” (Cf. André Bazin, *Qu’est-ce que le cinéma?*, p.13-14)

This transfer of reality is thus done in the absence of man, therefore we can call it a trans-human or even post-human ability, an aspect to be developed later. On the other hand, this “transference of reality from the thing to its reproduction” evokes an equivalence of being and reality. A similar point is made by Louis-Georges Schwartz, when he refers that in Bazin, for the French reader, “reality and appearance are brought very close together, almost conflated” ¹⁵², which doesn’t happen for the English reader. Remarkably, Schwartz also fiercely defends disconnecting Bazin from any reading of indexicality, through the example of the Egyptian “mummy complex”:

Bazin calls the mummy – the preservation of appearance in the medium of reality – the first statue. The mummy is already a plastic art, already an image, already somehow an aesthetic production. This short sentence shows us that what interests Bazin is not the index, whatever both his supporters and detractors claim. The mummy as an image ontologically connected to its model, the mummy *is* its model in flesh and bone. It prefigures the photograph of which Bazin will write that it *is* its model. Index describes neither mummy nor photograph. The word never appears in the essay for an index may be caused or inscribed by what it expresses, but is an entity different from what it expresses. The mummy and the one who might survive are one being. ¹⁵³

Obviously I agree on this point with Schwartz; it is my understanding that the idea of an ontology of the image as a relation to its model identifies the being of the image with the one of its model, a relation, which Bazin originates in the Egyptian mummies: the survival of being is at stake and in film it is achieved. Such an idea is clearly opposed to the understanding of the image as an index of the model and goes beyond the historical evidence of something that factually ‘*has been*’.

¹⁵² Louis-Georges Schwartz, “Deconstruction avant la lettre – Jacques Derrida Before André Bazin”, in: Dudley Andrews (Ed.), *Opening Bazin: Postwar Film Theory and its Afterlife*, Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 99

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 99

Furthermore, the fact that something is or has been, doesn't say anything about the nature of its being. I will argue that the conclusions about the nature of the film image are to be sought in the area of the *being of reality, which is not different in physical reality or its filmic reproduction*. This *being of reality, which becomes shareable in film*, is a pure being, out of time and space. This approach gives a new view of film and inquires into the understanding of the concepts of being and of reality, by questioning film's *being* and its relation to reality. That could be a possible answer to our question about what happens to reality in film: its being is shared by "mechanical reproduction" (technology), to evoke Walter Benjamin on who we will rely later. Yet is this a satisfying answer, or does it only lead to further questions?

3. Being in Time as Film

Considering the described entanglement of being and reality, which has been unfolded by analyzing Bazin's chain of argumentation, Cavell's question "what happens to reality when it is projected and screened?"¹⁵⁴ can be transformed into "what happens to being when it is projected and screened?" Whether being-in-reality or being-in-film – it is always *being* we are referring to, an observation evolved throughout the solaristic system by asking: what happens to being on the planet Solaris? 'Being-on-Solaris' is hereby understood as a projected *cine-being*: the solaristic visitors are cinematic protagonists, since they share the same being as their models. Therefore, that which we can assert about the planet and its relation to the scientists is applicable to

¹⁵⁴ Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.*, p. 16

cinema¹⁵⁵. Cavell claims that “we do not know what a photograph is; we do not know how to place it ontologically.”¹⁵⁶ Yet he ignores the fact that we are puzzled already by the ontological condition of being itself: we do not know what being is, therefore we are puzzled by its reproduction, even more its reproduction in time, which shares the temporal-ontological dimension of being. Right at the beginning of his major work *Being and Time* Heidegger has reintroduced the question of being into philosophy claiming that it has never been resolved in a proper way:

Do we in our time have an answer to the question of what we really mean by the word ‘being’ [Sein]? Not at all. So it is fitting that we should raise anew *the question of the meaning of Being*. But are we nowadays even perplexed at our inability to understand the expression ‘Being’? Not at all. So first of all we must reawaken an understanding for the meaning of this question. Our aim in the following treatise is to work out the question of the meaning of *Being* and to do so concretely. Our provisional aim is the Interpretation of *time* as the possible horizon for any understanding whatsoever of Being.¹⁵⁷

I believe that this special status, which being has for film, will become more understandable when thought through the Heideggerian tools of thinking, and vice versa: the fact that being can be reproduced by film, that *being-in-the-world* becomes ‘*being-in-film*’, adds a new characteristic and opens new ground for ontological consequences, which can expand Heidegger’s appreciation of being and time. Indeed, Heidegger’s conception of the inseparability of being and time (being *is* time for Heidegger), is reflected in film’s being *in time*. The entwinements of this will become clear throughout and developed gradually. For now, let me add that the condition of time receives a special treatment in “Solaris”.

¹⁵⁵ This idea anticipates a later conclusion of analyzing the neologism ‘being-in-film’ as well as the comparison of the ‘solaristic apparatus’ and the ‘filmic apparatus’, elucidating the aforementioned self-reflexivity of the medium film present in the movie “Solaris”.

Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.*, p. 17

¹⁵⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 1

According to the director Andrei Tarkovsky to make film *literally is* “sculpting in” or “of” time, an idea I will follow up later. Moreover, Bazin has stressed, that the dimension which cinema adds to the photography has its anchorage in time:

Viewed in this perspective, the cinema is objectivity in time¹⁵⁸. The film is no longer content to preserve the object, enshrouded as it were in an instant (...). Now, for the first time, the image of things is likewise the image of their duration, change mummified as it were.¹⁵⁹

Of crucial importance in this context is Heidegger’s theory of death, and his *not-yet* projection of the possibilities of being. Both are consequences of this idea of associating *being and time*, of Dasein’s temporality, its being conditioned *by time*. In its application to film the spectral and death-driven character of film in general and the movie “Solaris” in particular will be revealed, all in the fourth and fifth chapter of this part of the analysis.

Before going any further, I would like to introduce Tarkovsky’s underlying understanding of film or cinema and time, to better understand what lies behind the temporal conception of „Solaris“. Film as the art of the *moving* image relies on *time* and, as briefly mentioned, for Tarkovsky filmmaking is best described as *sculpting in time*. His aesthetic theory further confronts us directly with some of our concerns on the nature of reality, and is connected to the idea of factuality of film: that which Bazin calls “objectivity in time”. Tarkovsky refers to as time in *factual form* - a moving state in which all real objects (or subjects) manifest themselves and which can be recorded and brought back in film:

¹⁵⁸ The French original is less affirmative and richer, referring to an achievement of objectivity in time: “Dans cette perspective, le cinema apparaît comme l’achèvement dans le temps de l’objectivité photographique.” (Cf. André Bazin, *Qu’est-ce que le cinema?*, p. 14). This achievement enables the possibility to still reflect on its nature, instead of using the term ‘is’, which is, as we have shown, ontologically a puzzling term.

¹⁵⁹ André Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, p. 14-15

In what form does cinema print time? Let us define it as factual. And fact can consist of an event, or a person moving, or any material object; and furthermore the object can be presented as motionless and unchanging, in so far as that immobility exists within the actual course of time. That is where the roots are to be sought of the specific character of cinema.¹⁶⁰

This factuality of objects is, for Tarkovsky, the natural state of things in the flow of real time, an idea reminiscent of Henri Bergson, for whom the world moves in a constant flow of becoming. (The artifice in such a context is then the stable, the fix, the non-moving.) As an example for the impact of the factual form of time in film Tarkovsky refers to a famous sequence of early cinema: the shot of the approaching train by Auguste Lumière. When it had been screened for the first time, the spectators had been so frightened that they fled out of the room. Not only was the fact that they did not distinguish between the screen and the physical world remarkable; but also, for Tarkovsky, a completely "new aesthetic principle" was born:

For the first time in the history of the arts, in the history of culture, man found the means to take an impression of time. And simultaneously the possibility of reproducing that time on screen as often as he wanted, to repeat it and go back to it. (...) He acquired a matrix for actual time. Once seen and recorded, time could now be preserved in metal boxes over a long period (theoretically forever).¹⁶¹

It seems that this factuality of time is what for Tarkovsky conveys the real dimension of film: because of how it plays out temporally, and because of the way it is recorded in photographic image and sound, cinema is real and interferes with reality – as an artwork and simply as a film, as a moving image. Tarkovsky further relates the referred factual time of film to the concept of

¹⁶⁰ Andrej Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 63

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 62

*rhythm of the course of time*¹⁶². This rhythm relies on a certain *pressure of time*¹⁶³, and therefore does not derive from the editing (the juxtaposition of shots); the rhythm already exists within the shots, it is life. Thus Tarkovsky writes, on the opening sequence of “Solaris”:

Rhythm in cinema is conveyed by the life of the object visibly recorded in the frame. Just as from the quivering of a reed you can tell what sort of current, what pressure there is in a river, in the same way I know the movement of time from the flow of the life-process reproduced in the shot.¹⁶⁴

Tarkovsky describes how film appropriates the actual *life* of different beings and objects in their manifest motion in time, their rhythm. Film as a continuation of reality then prolongs the life of the spectators as an experience of condensed time – because it gives back time in compressed form: Tarkovsky points out a flower can perish in film in a minute.¹⁶⁵ Therefore film has a different status among the arts concerning the relation with reality and often is considered reality’s (bodiless) continuation. It conveys this continuation in such a hypnotic way that the spectator merges into it as if it were equal to reality.

Furthermore, according to Tarkovsky’s understanding of time, the past (memory) is more consistent and real than the present, which permanently flees and decomposes. Film gives this wonderful new possibility to impress and reproduce time, thus film *is* recorded memory and as such provides us with memories as if they were coming from real life experience; film images are memories of memories, a kind of meta-memories.

¹⁶² “The dominant, all-powerful factor of the film image is rhythm, expressing the course of time within the frame.” (Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 113)

¹⁶³ “The distinctive time running through the shots makes the rhythm of the picture; and rhythm is determined not by the length of the edited pieces, but by the pressure of the time that runs through them.” (Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 117)

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 120

¹⁶⁵ “(...) cinema, like no other art, widens, enhances and concentrates a person's experience—and not only enhances it but makes it longer, significantly longer. That is the power of cinema.” (Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 63)

“Solaris” operates with this mechanism going still one step further: human dreams are a kind of transforming processor of memories and the threshold to pass from memory to matter: memory literally becomes life on the planet, not only in factual, but also in material form. In this sense, the main aesthetic and conceptual principle of *cine-being* in “Solaris” can be described as an actualized form of past being or the *presence of something, which is absent*. Thereby arises the idea that the being of reality, which is grasped by film, is the same as in memory while we are remembering. It is a being of *memory images* in a Bergsonian sense: for Bergson the world is composed by images which interact. Memory-images or “image-rememberance” is for Bergson the registered form of “pure memory”¹⁶⁶. As I will show in the third chapter, this transcendent and displaced form of being reflects the very characteristics of photography and film. It evokes its spectral and somehow death-driven character, relying on the cinematographic imaging transcending matter and preserving time.

But before doing so, let us try to complete the evolvment of the being of *reality*, which becomes shareable in filmic reproduction. After having drawn some first considerations on being and time, I propose to reflect in the following on what we mean when we refer to reality: how can we reflect on film and its relation to reality, if we have not clarified what *reality* is? And regarding further film’s intra-active engagement with reality (evident in reality’s transference by film), this inquiry seems a promising project for reflection for a simple reason: In philosophy we have to describe reality, translate it into another system, the one of words; whereas film directly operates with reality by recording its images and sounds in movement: we are facing the reproduction of reality in the form of its being.

¹⁶⁶ See: Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3

IX.

TWISTED REALITY AND ITS REPRODUCTION

Let us resume the reflection on Bazin – he draws an inseparability of being and reality and claims that in the photographic image the depicted object *is* the model ontologically. Hereby I propose to step back for a moment from Cavell's interpretation of Bazin that film is *of* reality (or, in our terms, of being-in-reality), and propose instead, that film *is reproduced reality* because the being of reality is what is shared in filmic reproduction. Reproduction thereby is twofold. On the one hand it consists of recording (grasping and preserving) reality; on the other hand, by this doubling it is in continuity with reality and thus substituting reality. Yet this fact can only be understood if we presuppose and seek a multifold model of reality.

Therefore, instead of reflecting further on the nature of the technological reproduction of reality in moving image and sound, it is my proposal for this chapter to first develop further the concept of reality we are talking about – an unusual approach in the area of philosophy of film. What the word “reality” refers to – when we speak of the reproduction of reality or distinguish film from reality – seems to belong to general and universally held knowledge. Yet I will argue that it is as problematic as the term being: we do not know what reality is; it escapes when we try to grasp it. The intelligibility of reality presents one of the biggest challenges of the history of philosophy: how can we know or describe what reality really is if we only experience it from the inside, by being-in-reality? And which kind of reality is film, since reality is transferred into it?

1. Multifold Models of Reality

Since the time of the pre-Socratics and of Plato, the potential of illusion that can befall sensory perception has been stressed, and the distinction between reality and perception of reality has been established. In the further course of the history of philosophy, subjective and relative idealism on the one hand and direct or scientific realism / materialism on the other, in all possible facets and variations, have defined themselves as the main opposing positions regarding our grasp of reality and access to reliable knowledge and truth. In the context of this analysis I propose to conceptualize a multifold model of reality on which the solaristic system emerges and which I claim is reproduced by film.

Although this analysis is referring to the dichotomy of idealism - materialism, its main focus lies in the contemporary comeback of materialism and realism, which have been presenting a new, speculative twist on the knowledge of reality and the problem of human access. This new twist has hardly been explored in the context of aesthetics, and even less in the context of film. In this context it is to mention that the recent speculative turn in materialism and realism has somehow been anticipated by Henri Bergson's twofold stance abrogating the contradiction between realism and idealism. His position is often referred as "partial realism", a term Bergson himself uses in a letter to John Dewey.¹⁶⁷ It is further fruitful to take into account the appropriation of the Bergsonian 'world as image' by Gilles Deleuze in the area of philosophy of film.

Karl R. Popper has claimed that reality has a pluralist character, which he argues to be composed of three worlds: the first one of physical entities and events, the second one of consciousness and mental objects such as thoughts or feelings, and the third of objective knowledge and socio-cultural

¹⁶⁷ See: John Mullarkey, *The New Bergson*, Manchester University Press, 1999, p. 7

infrastructures.¹⁶⁸ His “threefold realism” is often compared to the Greek division into *physis*, *psyche* and *logos*.

According to Popper world 3 presents the abstract objects and products of thought like scientific theories or works of art, which after their creation gain an existence in world 1 as well, yet their importance lies in their content, not the physical form they manifest:

World 3 and world 1 overlap: world 3 encompasses, for instance, books, it contains statements; it contains above all human language. These are *also* physical objects, objects, events, that take place in world 1. Language consists, we may say, of dispositions anchored in nervous structures and therefore in something material; of elements of memory, engrams, expectations, learnt and discovered behavior; and of books. You can hear my lecture today because of acoustics: I am making a noise; and this noise is part of world 1. (...) At the same time I would like to show that the immaterial aspect of world 3 not only plays a role in our consciousness – in which it plays a major role – but that it is *real*, even apart from worlds 1 and 2. (...) there is something immaterial here, namely the *content* of our statements, of our arguments, in contrast to the acoustic or the written, and hence physical formulations of these statements or arguments.¹⁶⁹

Whereas world 1 and world 2 interact, world 2 (consciousness) functions as the mediator between the physical world (World 1) and the products of human thought (World 3), for example, the experience of listening to a piece of music. What is interesting in Popper’s approach is that he names a common denominator of world 1, 2 and 3: their realness. They are equally real, and this level of realness I suspect to be the realm of the real of reality: somehow a variable with the property to unite the material, the immaterial and that which pertains to consciousness. In any case, Popper does not give an example of a product belonging to three kinds of worlds at once; according to him there is a feedback interaction going on, in which world 2 emerges from

¹⁶⁸ See: Karl Popper, “Knowledge And The Shaping Of Reality: The Search For a Better World” in: *Search Of A Better World*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 22

and changes world 1, and world 3 emerges from and changes world 2.

Film is for some reason not mentioned by Popper (who prefers to refer to computer programs) and I will argue that film is the union and re-creation of worlds 1, 2 and 3 together; it is different from music, paintings or books, different from stories or theatre plays and different from scientific theories. On the one hand film clearly belongs to world 3, being a product of thought, gaining existence of its own, acting on world 1 and 2. On the other hand, this existence is far more complex than the usual products of thought, as not only is it to be grasped by consciousness and emotional experience, but it also directly enters and even substitutes the physical world: it is not the same kind of physical existence which a book has, in its carrying the words suggesting worlds of ideas. Since film is the reproduction of reality, it also is a continuation of physical reality: different from a book and different from noise, the physical reality of film carries world 1 and world 3, and encompasses several levels of world 2: the psyches of the film characters and the consciousness of the spectator. This means that film's reality is even more complex than the three worlds, because it encompasses all the three at once, it creates a world 3 which is also worlds 2 and 1 – even if its materiality is light and soundwaves, it is a physical existence to be seen and heard.

The solaristic system combines, in its understanding of reality, the physical reality, sensory perception and the inner processes of the mind as well as their products, following Popper; yet the solaristic system seeks for a bigger entanglement of the three kinds of worlds and adds an infinity of possible worlds: an infinite multifold model of reality, as many worlds as there are films. Popper's model could also be compared to how Maurice Merleau-Ponty would describe "the world". Physical reality would be complemented by "the natural setting of, and field for all my thoughts and all my explicit perceptions."¹⁷⁰ For Merleau-Ponty perceptions are the human relation with the outer world (the interaction of World 1 and World 2 in Popper) – which actually is accessed by humans as appearance, composed of perceptual objects and by consciousness as a projective activity of the mind. Therefore

¹⁷⁰ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. xii

the appearance of objects can conceal their reality and is distinct from reality. Merleau-Ponty further fuses the perception and the perceived object when he argues:

Perception is precisely that kind of act in which there can be no question of setting the act itself apart from the end to which it is directed. Perception and the perceived necessarily have the same existential modality, since perception is inseparable from the consciousness which it has, or rather is, of reaching the thing itself. Any contention that the perception is indubitable, whereas the thing perceived is not, must be ruled out. If I see an ashtray, *in the full sense of the word* see, there must be an ashtray there, and I cannot forego this assertion. To see is to see something. (...) How can we possibly dissociate the certainty of our perceptual existence from that of its external counterpart?¹⁷¹

I propose to read Merleau-Ponty in the sense that perception discloses certain *properties of reality*, even if I can only be aware or sense some of them, conditioned by my senses, at least its existence is disclosed. And similarly to his contemporary Henri Bergson, he gives perception and the perceived “the same existential modality”: the object does exist externally of the mind, because the perceiver is as well part of the same world. This does not mean, for Merleau-Ponty, that the perception corresponds to the whole reality of the perceived object, and we can give such a thought a realist reading¹⁷².

¹⁷¹ Thomas Baldwin (ed.), *Maurice Merleau Ponty: Basic Writings*, p. 173

¹⁷² The further analysis of this assumption goes beyond our scope of analysis.

2. The World as Image

Bergson assumes an equality of “the reality of spirit and the reality of matter”¹⁷³, a position between idealism and realism, relating and fusing the spheres of concept and percept of reality in an unexpected way. Instead of distinguishing appearance and reality, Bergson speaks of image. For him, the world is image – it is composed of images which interact: “All these images act and react to upon one another in all their elementary parts according to constant laws which I call laws of nature.”¹⁷⁴ These images exist independently of being grasped by the human mind. They are “images perceived when my senses are opened to them, unperceived, when they are closed.”¹⁷⁵ The body is thereby an image, which is different from other images, because the body filters images via the brain, which is itself “only an image among other images”¹⁷⁶.

Therefore, the brain does not contain nor create the other images, but is contained in the material world itself, being itself an image: “images themselves, they cannot create images.”¹⁷⁷ All images continue to exist, even without the brain perceiving them. Images are matter for Bergson. Perception thereby is defined as follows: “*I call matter the aggregate of images and perception of matter these same images referred to the eventual action of one particular image, my body.*”¹⁷⁸ But Bergson does not distinguish the reality of these ‘perception-images’¹⁷⁹ and those images, which exist even unperceived, the ‘matter-images’. They are the same images, although they belong to

¹⁷³ Henri Bergson, *op. cit.*, p. vii

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7

¹⁷⁹ The perception-image I refer to here is extrapolated from the Bergsonian thought and is to be distinguished from the perception-image in film, which Deleuze introduces in *Cinema 1 – The Movement-Image*.

different systems:

Here is a system of images which I term my perception of the universe, and which may be entirely altered by a very slight change in a certain privileged image, - *my body*. This image occupies the centre (...). Here, on the other hand, are the same images, but referred each one to itself; influencing each other no doubt, but in such a manner that the effect is always in proportion to the cause: this is what I term *the universe*.¹⁸⁰

The main distinction between these two kind of systems is that the perception-system contains matter-images which have been reacted upon the body/brain: they are 'movement-images'¹⁸¹ or perception-images, but not images created by our mind. Ultimately Bergson suggests a conflation between images inside and outside the human mind. Mind and matter are thereby equally real, in the sense of both being images, composed by certain kind of images, inner ones and outer ones:

Every image is within certain images and without others; but of the aggregate of images we cannot say that it is within or without us, since interiority and exteriority are only relations among images.¹⁸²

Reality is then defined as a multiple of image(s). This idea of image would be the unifier of the three worlds of Karl Popper, as interiority and exteriority are not distinct worlds, but mere relations among images. Therefore Bergson's theory has a high potential to be applied to the kind of reality that film (re)produces. Images for Bergson belong to what Merleau-Ponty refers to as "the same existential modality", although for Merleau-Ponty they are distinct from reality. For Bergson, on the other hand, appearance is not to be distinguished from reality, but every image is to be seen as part of a bigger

¹⁸⁰ Henri Bergson, *op.cit.*, p. 12

¹⁸¹ The movement-image I refer to here is, too, an extrapolation from Bergsonian thought and is to be distinguished from the movement-image in film, which Deleuze introduces in *Cinema 1 – The Movement-Image*.

¹⁸² Henri Bergson, *op.cit.*, p. 13

whole:

My consciousness of matter is then no longer either subjective, as it is for English idealism, or relative, as it is for the Kantian idealism. It is not subjective, as it is in things rather than in me. It is not relative, because the relation between the 'phenomenon' and the 'thing' is not that of appearance to reality, but merely that of the part to the whole.¹⁸³

Yet it is Gilles Deleuze who will make the attempt to classify with the help of cinema – but not only cinema – all the possible kinds, systems and layers of images, integrated in a rhizomatic model of thought. Images are thereby not equivalent to concepts, but can convey concepts in a more fluid way. I will come back to the Deleuzian approach later. For now, let me dive into the current return of realism.

3. Overcoming Correlationism

In contemporary philosophy the discussion on reality and its perception has taken an ontological turn; speculative realism in particular has given reflection on reality a new realist or materialist twist, delineating an ontological framework to its epistemological implications. The contemporary French philosopher Quentin Meillassoux has thereby coined a stance against "correlationism" – correlationism being the Berkeleyian-Kantian idea that:

Thought cannot get *outside itself* in order to compare the world as it is 'in itself' to the world as it is 'for us', and thereby to distinguish what is a function of our relation to the world from what belongs to the world alone."¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 306

¹⁸⁴ Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, pp. 3-4

Meillassoux criticizes this interplay between man and world, which is reducing the access to reliable knowledge on being and on reality to human thought. His position requires a renovation of our relation with reality and thereby evokes, from the solaristic point of view, the achievements of film. I will argue that in film (and on *Solaris*) thought actually *gets outside itself*, we finally can think x from outside x (an assertion I will further explain later). Through its reproduction the world can be postulated as it is in itself. According to Meillassoux, correlationism is furthermore “the idea according to which we only ever have access to the correlation between thinking and being, and never to either term considered apart from the other.”¹⁸⁵ A pertinent question in our context is therefore whether “*Solaris*” is a correlationist proposal or not: I will argue that it is not.

Firstly, the planet is too big a mystery – it is the exemplification of a non-human intelligence. And secondly, visitor Harey, the embodiment of the *principle of the presence of absence*, quickly gains independence from her projector Kris – she is a thinking of Kris who becomes an independent being. It is further the ability of the planet to let the humans sense the limits of conventional (scientific) knowledge versus the unlimited entanglements of intuition, which is distinct from correlationism and above all, from representationalism. *Solaris* answers to human thought with non-human thought, delineating man’s best human qualities as relying on his perceptions, memories and intuition.

The rejection of correlationism is the lowest common denominator, which unites rather different positions within speculative realism, which is fractured into currents like transcendental materialism, new realism or object-oriented philosophy. Bergson would have also rejected correlationism. He avoids it by refusing the dualism idealism-materialism as he tries to integrate subjectivity (perception) in his approach of reality. As has been mentioned, the challenge in the context of this treatise consists in the fact that speculative realism has widely been ignoring film in particular and art in general (apart

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 5

from some selective studies), with the exception of Graham Harman for whom “aesthetic reflection and judgment are employed in metaphysical speculation into what a mind-independent reality might be like”.¹⁸⁶ He further directly claims, that “aesthetics is first philosophy”¹⁸⁷. Although Harman himself does not consider film separately from other forms of art, since his position can be considered as an “aesthetic turn”¹⁸⁸ in speculative realism, it will be engaged with this development of the solaristic system, and the central Harmanian concept of allure will be focused on in this regard.

The history of theory and philosophy of film has persisted in the use of a clumsy definition of reality, mostly referring to physical reality, without further reflecting on what that means. An exception might be Deleuze, whose reflections on film are integrated into an original system of thought characterized by a rhizomatic way of thinking establishing multiples of assemblages. Deleuze at least avoids the term reality, instead developing the concept of virtuality, which for him is just as real as physical presence or actuality. Instead of the term “reality” Deleuze uses the concept of a complexly constituted *plane of immanence* consisting of all sort of objects, particles, relations and beings, somehow echoing the Bergsonian ideas of different kinds and systems of images and movements:

There are only relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness between unformed elements, or at least between elements that are relatively unformed, molecules, and particles of all kinds. There are only haecceities, affects, subjectless individuations that constitute collective assemblages. (...) We call this plane which knows only longitudes, speeds and haecceities, the plane of consistency or composition (as opposed to the plan(e) of organization or development). It is necessarily a plane of immanence and univocity. We therefore call it the plane of Nature, although nature has

¹⁸⁶ Francis Halshall, “Art and Guerilla Metaphysics” in: *Speculations V: Aesthetics in the 21st Century*, p. 383

¹⁸⁷ Graham Harman, *Aesthetics as First Philosophy: Levinas and the Non-Human* (available online)

¹⁸⁸ Francis Halshall, *op. cit.*, p. 383

nothing to do with it, since on this plane there is no distinction between the natural and the artificial. (...) Its number of dimensions continually increases as what happens, but even so it loses nothing of its planitude. It is thus a plane of proliferation, peopling, contagion. (...) It is a fixed plane, a fixed sound plane, or visual plane, or writing plane etc. Here fixed does not mean immobile.¹⁸⁹

To come back to the contemporary, ontological turn: Markus Gabriel develops a new ontological realism, which is also coined by an idea of multiple reality, which is multi-layered yet without totalizing unity. According to Gabriel, that which is perceived of an object is a property of the object, whether we perceive it or not. Perceptions are “world involving”, but will not change the actual object. Gabriel further argues for a multilayered reality and “recognizes the existence of perspectives and constructions as world-involving relations”¹⁹⁰ and therefore part of “reality”. In the solaristic system perceptions and thoughts are actually properties of the objects as well: we only can perceive and think what lies in the nature of the objects. In this sense, that which actually happens on Solaris is an anomaly of interaction between fields of sense: inner images switch into physical reality.

Yet Gabriel goes one step further in the understanding of “reality” or “world”, which he completely rejects as category: they are “non-existing” as belonging to the domain of “metaphysical totalities”, to be rejected. Gabriel is against “the idea that there is or ought to be a unified totality of what there is, whether you call it ‘the world’, ‘being’ or ‘reality’.”¹⁹¹ Therefore Gabriel claims a position, which he defends as ontological, rather than metaphysical. In his theory there is no such thing as one unifying domain of one reality, not even of realities, whether they are mind-independent or not. Realities belong to different contexts, which Gabriel elaborates, designating them as “fields of sense”. Some of these fields can be intersecting or overlapping.

¹⁸⁹ Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, pp. 293-294

¹⁹⁰ Markus Gabriel, *Fields of Sense: A New Realist Ontology*, 2015, p. 11

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 5

Although I find the idea of intersecting fields, which I would call in my context “fields of images”, attractive, it does not matter to my analysis whether these fields belong to a domain (like for example Deleuze’s plane of immanence, which at the same time is multiple) or not. What matters in the solaristic system is the reproducibility of the fields: reproducibility set as a domain where the *fields of images* are constituted by frames in movement. What of reality is, or *which kind of bearers of movement* are reproducible? Can we reproduce all the fields of sense? The answer is that we cannot reproduce them all at the same time, but they are all reproducible. Furthermore it is likely to suppose that we reproduce several fields at once. Does this common feature of reproducibility or of “being real” put them in a unifying domain? And if reality is “all there is”, an infinity of fields of sense, where *is* this “there”, for what does it stand? The answer to this kind of question goes beyond the scope of this analysis and must remain without a conclusive answer.

However, the input we can transfer from Gabriel’s approach is that in order to be real or to *belong to reality*, to be a field of sense, it is not necessary that this field represents all the other fields, or a totality: each field only presents itself as a piece of reality, which is not meant to be a totalizing category.

Furthermore an allegorical comparison to the cinematographic frame is tempting: each frame is a field of sense, yet they all belong to one film, another field of sense, containing other fields of sense and overlapping with other fields of sense. A film is then more than its duration, it increases with the minds of the spectators and with the ongoing discussion about it. On the other hand, and opposed to Gabriel’s position, film can also be seen as closed in itself, as a metaphysical unity of reality, even if it is only a plane of immanence, to put it in Deleuzian terms. Any film has a beginning and it has an ending – a fundamental structure of closure on which I propose further reflection in Chapter XI.

4. The Reproducibility of Multifold Reality

Let me go back to the beginning of this chapter – to the idea of defining reality, in order to conclude on its reproduction: Film involves a privileged relation towards reality, as it records and doubles reality directly, yet we have not considered the full consequences of setting reproducibility as a unifying property of reality. As we have seen with the example of Markus Gabriel's fields of sense, integrating the reproducibility of reality into the idea of reality's manifoldness is complex. Is the truly whole manifold being of reality reproducible? What about thought, fantasies, imaginary objects and inner movements like affects and perceptions being part of reality and its being, and thus reproducible? Since film records image and sound, is there a reproducibility besides that which we can see and hear possible, besides the field of sense called physical reality?

Some may object against this hypothesis arguing somewhat as follows: "Obviously in film there only can be reproduced what is visible/audible, therefore we cannot reproduce thought, fantasies, inner processes or relations, because their expression in image and sound would be a mere translation, a transfer into another area, and therefore an approximate construction." This objection is similar to a scientific realist view, where the concept of reality only implies that which is measurable.

One possibility to refute this objection would be to recall Popper's model of threefold reality, in which one world emerges from the other: world 2 from world 1 and world 3 from world 2. This could mean that by reproducing world 1, world 2 will emerge and by this world 3, automatically. We cannot consider reality in its whole, if we only isolate physical qualities. Also, we only can reproduce emotions, if we reproduce the physical entities from which they emerge. Bergson's approach to images would especially strengthen such a proposition: images are *all there is* in action, reaction and interaction and this complexity of moving images is not lost in the reproduction.

Furthermore, different approaches in film philosophy which I have been explaining in the introduction of this thesis have shown how much film is a stream of consciousness or thought (according to Deleuze but also Epstein, or, more recently, Frampton), which could not be drawn into the recorded material had it not been already there in the recording. The editing just molds and shapes by assemblage that which is recorded, catalyzing its possibilities of thought. Probably it is exactly this inherent thinking capacity of film, which makes it so similar to reality and constitutes the reason for it having such a strong impact on our mind. This reason consists in the fact that inner fields are entangled with outer worlds and never exist on their own. We cannot create a withdrawn inner world without reference to the exterior, and vice versa. Furthermore, even if we assemble the recorded images and combine them into something “new”, we are always making an appropriation of reality: even the most elaborated film montage and the most skilled editor, cannot change the basic attributes of the recorded material: although you can do some construction work in the editing room, you cannot construct any kind of film out of any kind of material. You cannot change your bricks. There always remains a direct connection of continuity with that (field of sense) which has been recorded, a factuality (Tarkovsky) or a “presence of what is present” (Heidegger), the latter one to be explored in the next chapter.

Let me briefly recall in this context the thought of Epstein, for whom reality as such is not existing, because it is composed of a “sum of unrealities”¹⁹², deriving from continuity (time) and discontinuity (coexistence in space), the two different “interchangeable modes of unreality”¹⁹³, which he also calls perspectives:

The cinematograph (...) shows time to be merely a perspective resulting from the succession of phenomena, the way space is merely a perspective of the coexistence of things. Time contains nothing we might call time-in-itself, no more so than space comprises space-in-itself.(...) Thus, after having taught us about the unreality of both, continuity and discontinuity, the cinematograph

¹⁹² Jean Epstein, *The Intelligence of a machine*, p. 15

¹⁹³ Ibid., pp. 15-16

rather abruptly ushers us into the unreality of space-time.¹⁹⁴

It is remarkable that this character of “unreality” of space and time does away with the totalizing concepts of “space in itself” and “time in itself” and that this conclusion, for Epstein, has become perceivable through film. Film explores and thereby discloses a “sum of unrealities”¹⁹⁵, the possibilities of *unreality of reality itself*, that is, film unconceals features of reality which otherwise would have remained withdrawn. This example shows well how complex the reproduction of reality is and how much the appearance of cinema has shaped our understanding and thereby perception of reality: it has become multiple and stretchable, beyond a totalizing domain: there is no time in itself, no space in itself, no reality in itself, but rather there is unreality.

In everyday life we got an insight into this *multifold unreality of reality*, the “sum of unrealities”¹⁹⁶ through the omnipresence of audiovisual reproduction, which expanded cinema and TV with the mobile internet and recently the technique of 3D-video-mapping, to be considered a new form of cinema. In the Deleuzian universe of rhizomatic thought, this notion of image in which “matter = movement = image = perception”¹⁹⁷ is integrated into the plane of immanence constituted by an infinitude of images in constant movement and interaction: “This infinite set of all images constitutes a kind of plane [*plan*] of immanence.”¹⁹⁸ We are in fact constantly switching between an infinity of image sequences or fields of sense, to reconnect this to Markus Gabriel.

The above means that we have very different kind of images and that

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 24-25

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 15

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 15

¹⁹⁷ “An image is the expression of matter, its *consistency* in movement, and not the representation of that matter; indeed, when Bergson speaks of an image, the connotation is not of an illusion but of an affective intensity. Matter is tantamount to perception and Bergson maintains that images themselves are the expression of this confluence: matter = movement = image = perception.” (Cf. Gregory Flaxman “Cinema Year Zero”, in: *The Brain is the screen*, p. 92)

¹⁹⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *CINEMA 1: The Movement Image*, p. 61

in film, an image is never just an image of reality's surface, but as complex as reality itself. It reproduces all the complexities of the plane(s) of immanence, different fields of sense, images of all kinds, continuing what they reproduce, interacting with it, and with each other. Despite the factual objectivity of the photographic lens which shows that something has factually "been there" and done work, the filmed image is as little neutral or objective, as our perception is, or as multiple, unreal or non-existing as reality itself.

Let us think further, about the recording process of the cinematograph. It is a very complex procedure as there is an *infinity of choices* as to *how* the image is to be recorded, its framing and mise-en-scène. We can largely vary perspective composed by scale, angle, position, height of camera, inclination and camera movement. All the possible different images are equally real and equally reproducible. Yet although the recording is the automatic act of a machine, the choice of the images is highly subjective and the result of a mental operation. This mental operation will always be reflected and shape the recorded image, which will be a result of a choice out of an infinity of possible perception-images related to the same matter-images. The operator of the camera, the cinematographer, by choosing a way of perception chooses bits of reality – whether of a fictional performance or not – which are subsequently assembled.

But why is this so? Even knowing about the manifoldness of unreality being reproduced, we have, until now, presupposed the reproduction of reality, rather than actually defined the *what* of reproduction. Why do we even think a *reproduction* of reality is taking place, why is there a transfer of reality from the thing to its reproduction? What is it that makes the reproduced real? In the following chapter we will try to elaborate a definition as to *what of reality* is being reproduced in film, by going back into the the shareability of the *being of reality*, yet moving one step further in the chain of argumentation by claiming that the *being of reality* (in all its possible multiple forms, actions and levels) is what makes reality real. Therefore, in the following chapter, the real of reality will be introduced, and its cine-being further characterized.

X.

ASKING FOR THE REAL OF REALITY

1. The Concept

Philosophy, since its very beginning, has been relying on allegories presenting the elusive character of reality, easily withdrawing from the grasp of intelligibility. The most famous example is Plato's allegory of the cave, reflecting on the limitation of our access to truth and frequently employed as philosophy's preferred metaphor of film as an illusionary reality. Yet in my view the allegory of the cave is not the best example to describe the nature of film: the reproduction of reality is far more complicated than the projection of shadows on a wall, set as illusion, because it is the only thing the chained cave dwellers discern and know at all. In contrast to them the film spectator knows there is another reality beyond the projection. As mentioned in the introduction of this analysis I would rather agree with Badiou, who claims:

(C)inema is not a false reality. Cinema is a new relationship to the Real itself.¹⁹⁹ (...) (C)inema is an illusion, which says that it is an illusion, naturally.

¹⁹⁹ Compare to: "Cinema becomes the *motion* of what is real, much more than its representation." (Cf. Jean-Luc Nancy, *L'évidence du film : Abbas Kiarostami = The evidence of film*, p. 26) and: "The reality of images is the access to the real itself" (Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 16-17)

So it is a completely different situation from the prisoners in the cave who are of the conviction that the images are the only form of the Real.²⁰⁰

This statement brings a new perspective into our analysis. The development of the solaristic system entails the proposal to explore this “new relationship to the Real itself” by asking for *the real of reality in film*, which I intend to define throughout this chapter. We have already argued that film is a privileged medium for reproducing reality and we have introduced multifold models of reality, stating the non-existence of one final reality. Yet we have not been able to answer in satisfying terms *what of reality* (its being) exactly is reproduced by film to be recognized as such and what does this reproducibility tell us about the real?

Let me go back to the idea that a film is composed by images and that for Bergson the world is image. But what *is* an image? Isn't it exactly that which bears and carries the real of reality? And is the film-image just a machinic perception of this real image, detached from its preceptor, an image in itself? Or is the reproduced image we see in film the same as its original? Let me focus on how Bergson argues in detail when he defines what an image is. According to him, an image lies somewhere between the thing itself (in the materialistic sense) and its representation (in the idealistic sense). He therefore defines matter as an aggregate of images:

Matter, in our view, is an aggregate of ‘images’; and by ‘image’ we mean a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a representation, but less than that, which the realist calls a thing, - an existence placed half-way between the ‘thing’ and the ‘representation’.²⁰¹

Furthermore, as Bergson continues in his argumentation, the perception of matter and the image of matter coincide in the sense that “it is really in P, and not elsewhere, that the image of P is formed and

²⁰⁰ Alain Badiou, *Cinema and Philosophy*, available online

²⁰¹ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 7.

perceived.”²⁰² Yet this image differs from perception: “It is true that an image may be without being perceived”, says Bergson, “it may be present without being represented”²⁰³. Presence and representation of an image are two different things, just as matter and perception are. But this means, and here Bergson holds a position different from the classical materialists as well as from the classical dualists, *that matter (and its movements) is not isolated from the rest of the world, and neither is perception.*

There are movements of the material world and movements of perception, and they interact. On the one hand, there is a *mind-independent reality* for Bergson, yet on the other hand, perception is part of the very same reality. “[O]f the aggregate of images we cannot say that it is within us or without us, since interiority and exteriority are only relations among images.”²⁰⁴ Therefore in Bergson’s theory mind and world, subjectivity and reality are entangled. Such a position is solaristic (and therefore cinematographic) and describes well the *fluid nature of the real of reality*, recalling the surface of the planet Solaris covered by a liquid substance, which changes and shapes itself into beings and islands by the influence of the human mind. I will come back to this point later on. The film image is again only one possible image out of an (infinite) aggregate of images.

We have already mentioned that Pasolini has considerably been advancing the theoretical reflection on film. His main contribution lies in analyzing the language (‘linguaggio’ in Italian in opposition to ‘lingua’, based on words) of film and reality is based on action and its shots and images composed by objects, which he calls “kinemes”. This language of film, so Pasolini claims, is the same language as that of life itself and therefore he grounds his theory on the difference between film and the other arts: namely by claiming that film is not, like the other forms of art, based on mimesis. For Pasolini film rather is an art, which *expresses reality by directly reproducing reality*:

²⁰² Ibid., p.102

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 27

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 13

Cinema does not evoke reality as literary language does; it does not copy reality like painting; it does not mimic reality like theatre. Cinema reproduces reality: image and sound! In reproducing reality, what does it do? Cinema expresses reality with reality²⁰⁵.

This statement reveals itself as extremely intriguing if one inquires its further implications: what does it actually mean to *express reality* and to do so *with reality*? It is this *expressed reality*, which Pasolini calls cinema and which demands a more exact definition and delimitation, after all different from reality? Or should one suppose that the *expression of reality called cinema* is already to be found *inside reality* - in such a way that it would *not* be distinct from it? But then, *how* is reality to be expressed *with itself*? Pasolini further expounds:

By studying the cinema as a system of signs, I came to the conclusion, that it is a non-conventional and non-symbolic language [*linguaggio*] unlike the symbolic written or spoken language [*lingua*], and expresses reality not through symbols but via reality itself. (...) So the question is: what is the difference between the cinema and reality? Practically none. I realized that the cinema is a system of signs whose semiology corresponds to a possible semiology of the system of signs of reality itself. So the cinema always forced me to remain always at the level of reality, right inside reality.²⁰⁶

I agree with Pasolini's statement that cinema *expresses reality with reality* and that cinema withdraws from the symbolic order by operating with "the system of signs of reality itself". Cinema is a reality-based language in the sense of the Italian *linguaggio*. Pasolini says "There is no symbolic or conventional filter between me and reality, as there is in literature."²⁰⁷ As we will reflect on later, the Lacanian Real is described exactly as withdrawing from the symbolic: "*The real is that, which resists symbolization absolutely.*"²⁰⁸

²⁰⁵ Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Pasolini on Pasolini: Interviews with Oswald Stack*, p. 29

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 29

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 29

²⁰⁸ Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar. Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of*

With 'discernible presence' of the real of reality, which film reproduces, I refer to an immanent presence impossible to be sensed: I cannot necessarily touch, see, hear or smell it, yet it is there. It is *beyond* image and sound, although transported by it and in-between, positioned somewhere at the interstice between time, matter, spirit, mood or other imaginable dimensions. It is my claim that this real becomes only graspable through film by the reproduction of reality. Without film reproducing reality, we would not have any ontological notion of this real of reality.

I therefore agree with Pasolini that in cinema we are *in reality*. As he says, the spectator has the impression to be "right inside reality"²⁰⁹ - but where are we actually? Why is the reality of film, cinema, "always at the level of reality"²¹⁰? What is it of reality that makes film reality be as real as reality? How can the real of reality be transferred from life to celluloid? I will argue that this apparent *paradox of cinema and reality* is symptomatic for the character of the real reality itself: *the real of reality lies beyond reality's physical side and is independent of time and space*. It is that of reality which persists in reproduction and turns film real – although being a different kind of reality – or just a different field of sense, to recall Gabriel.

The only possible solution for the paradox consists in conceiving the real of reality as a fluid being integrated in a multifold model reality of special characteristics: a model permeable enough to let this fluid real to be transferred from one level of reality to the next. The real of reality would be then something able to pass from one field of sense to another one in terms of presence. Another possibility is to conceive it as that which constitutes the "existential modality" of the Bergsonian images, which allows them to always be the same image, whether belonging to the system of perception or the one of matter. If we further think of Popper's threefold model, we must appropriate this real of reality as that which unites the three worlds – makes them equally real and is the corresponding entity designated when we use the word reality.

Psychoanalysis, p. 66

²⁰⁹ Pier Paolo Pasolini, *op. cit.*, p. 29

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 29

And if we think of Merleau-Ponty, than this real of reality might be that which gives us certainty that appearance is a part of reality: that the perceived object is real.

2. Being without Being

In epistemological and ontological terms, we can describe the nature of the real of reality as it is expressed by cinema (with different insights) better than we could have described reality itself, which does not exist to boot. The main reason is that in reproduction we have chosen a perspective on reality and embodied a new perspective for thought: we look at reality from the outside of reality. We have already mentioned, but it is worth emphasizing here, that this shift of perspective for human thought is the most incisive since the Copernican revolution. Some of the consequences we can consider by analyzing the events on the planet Solaris: to look at our own memories in a doubled state of being creates an interactivity. This interactivity ultimately reflects the mystery of Harey's existence, which is not supposed to exist independently of Kelvin's mind. Harey embodies an alluring presence of an absent bit of reality, a dislocation which is, according to Stanley Cavell, characteristic of film itself:

Objects projected on a screen are inherently reflexive, they occur as self-referential, reflecting upon their physical origins. Their presence refers to their absence, their location in another place.²¹¹

This idea of the presence of objects, which simultaneously is an absence, reminds one of Badiou's aforementioned "*absence* of the Real" which

²¹¹ "Objects projected on a screen are inherently reflexive, they occur as self-referential, reflecting upon their physical origins. Their presence refers to their absence, their location in another place." (Cf. Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.*, pp. xv-xvi)

simultaneously “says something new concerning the Real itself” and thus evokes the Real. The reason for this *negative subsistence* of presence is determined by the ontological essence of film, which is entangled with the real of reality. The special characteristic of the *reproduced real of reality in film*, to be absent although present, evokes a kind of *negation of negation of the Real*: Film is real *by negating the presence* of what is real, which is again negated. It is referring to an absence, which negates its absence, as it simultaneously evokes presence.

The main conflict of “Solaris” reflects this *absence-referring-presence*, a condition which I will call a *being without being* deriving from the *negation of negation of the Real* and which will become clearer throughout. This condition is embodied and carried out as a principle by the central character Harey: She is the *dramatis persona* whose aberrant existence is the film’s main conflict and thus she is the film’s most important “conceptual persona” (CP). The term is borrowed from Deleuze and Guattari (who base the concept on Nietzsche): the “conceptual persona” conveys movement of thought and “is the becoming or the subject of a philosophy.”²¹² It is to be understood as the embodiment or personified image of philosophical concepts. Through the dramatic conflicts of CPs in “Solaris” we can establish a conceptual field of solaristic tensions between the concepts raised by the movie and actualized by the CPs.

One may argue against Cavell that any pictured object, even on a painting or a drawing, provokes this referred presence of absence. Cavell therefore suggests: “the world of a painting is not continuous with the world of its frame; at its frame, a world finds its limits. We might say: A painting *is* a world; a photograph is *of* the world.”²¹³ Yet we can argue with CP Harey, who is the conceptual embodiment of cine-being, that film generates this presence of absence by giving it the same impact as reality because of the special ability that film has. This ability is a reinforcing condition for both *being* real and *being taken* from reality, therefore making the film image a continuation of reality, yet one that

²¹² Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 63

²¹³ Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.*, p. 24

is *present* in a quality other than physical matter. This presence of Harey is the key to ask for the real of reality.

But before going further into the presence of CP Harey, let me recall Bazin who claims that “the photographic image *is* the model” and assumes a “transference of reality from the thing to its reproduction”²¹⁴. As I have previously argued, Bazin indirectly suggests an ontological equivalence of being and reality, presupposing reality as something that gives being its frame of existence or, put in other words, as a necessary property of being or even its primary condition: there is no being without reality, just as being is a necessary property of reality. Consequently I will claim for an *intra-active reciprocity of being and reality*.

This reciprocity reminds us of Dasein’s being as a ‘being-in-the-world’, a term conceived by Heidegger, who has re-introduced the question about being in modern philosophy, stressing its temporal dimension. But the term is still more complex, even in its relation to cinema, or reproduced being. As we will see later, the word being - in German “*sein*” - implies the meaning of dwelling²¹⁵ for Heidegger who therefore sets Dasein’s being as an existential ‘*being-in*’, further its essential structure as ‘*being-in-the-world*’²¹⁶. For Heidegger Dasein and its environment are inseparable in their coexistence, whereby the world is “a characteristic of Dasein itself”²¹⁷. This correlationist perspective of Heidegger implies at the same time a way for thought to try to grasp the sense of being, which is not limited by Dasein’s perspective although accessed by it.

The German word *Dasein* literally translated means *being-there*, whereby the ‘*there*’ (*‘Da’*) of Da-sein designates the ‘*world*’. Dasein and world cannot be grasped separately, which induces that being-in-the-world is not meant as a spatial condition of being, but an ontological one. I propose to transfer Heidegger’s *being-in-the-world*, which entails a multiplicity of

²¹⁴ Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, p. 14

²¹⁵ “ ‘Being’ [Sein] – is the infinitive from I am [Ich bin], which also means ‘to reside alongside...’ or ‘to be familiar with’.” (Cf. Martin Heidegger, *op. cit.*, p. 80)

²¹⁶ “ ‘Being-in’ is (...) the formal existential expression for the Being of Dasein, which has Being-in-the-world as its essential state.” (Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 80)

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 92

possibilities for Dasein (again, we are facing a multifold model), into the neologism *being-in-film*; it designates a possibility of being which Dasein enters when watching a movie. This neologism will be further elucidated in the chapter I of the third part of this analysis.

However, on Solaris reality is transferred from *being-in-the-world* to *being-on-Solaris*. We could even claim that the whole film is the being-in-the-world as being-on-Solaris of protagonist Kris Kelvin: Solaris is a characteristic of Kelvin's Dasein, a world in which reality and being are entangled, in which even immaterial being becomes real, like in film - a phantasmagoric scenery. Film is in this sense not representational, but, as Cavell claims, *re-presentational*, a characteristic causing "ontological restlessness", a state of mind CP Harey and CP Kelvin are haunted by. Let us recall:

A photograph does not present us with "likeness" of things; it presents us, we want to say, with the things themselves. But wanting to say that may well make us ontologically restless. (...) We do not know what a photograph is; we do not know how to place it ontologically.²¹⁸

Harey is like a moving photograph – she *is* its deceased model on Earth. We have already traced Cavell's statement back to Bazin and forward to Heidegger. As we have mentioned hereby, the answer to Cavell must be that the puzzling part of the question already lies in the *ontological condition of being itself*: we do not know what being is nor "how to place it ontologically", which is why Heidegger has not ceased for a lifetime to reflect on being. And that is also why Heidegger's philosophy and that building on it can give us some guidance regarding this question raised by Cavell, which again demands an extension of Heidegger's reflection on being in an unexpected way.

To put it therefore in Heideggerian terms: what significantly changes when one supposes film as world and world as film is the nature of time and of Dasein. However, before going further into this change of Dasein, I would like to introduce the following condition of film: as CP Harey shows, death has

²¹⁸ Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18

been accessed by film. The reproduced image outlives its depicted objects, and there are ontological consequences to consider. In film it is no longer clear what life and what death are, given that the nature of time has been altered - In film I step beyond time — into film-time. Film-time can condense and expand, it is relative and does not exist in itself: Although the question in this context maybe should not be, whether the nature of time has changed. It is more likely instead that film discloses the true nature of time, which withdraws from natural perception.

Furthermore, the hypothesis of *film-as-death* reassesses Heidegger's concepts of being, time and death. As a *being-no-more*, death is bound to Dasein's *being-in-the-world*, and Heidegger even designates death as "a phenomenon of life"²¹⁹. *Film-as-death*, would be then a possibility for a *doubled Dasein* experiencing a *being-in-death*: Through film I glide into a spectral world. The film-beings (usually called "characters") are somehow like ghosts to us. In chapter II of the third part I will examine more closely this peculiar nature of film, which allows Dasein to experience death without dying.

Cavell brings up yet another point: "That the projected world does not exist (now) is its only difference from reality."²²⁰ This idea of a *displacement in time* meets the already mentioned aesthetic theory of Tarkovsky, for whom filmmaking is sculpting in time. As we have seen, Tarkovsky further refers to film as time in *factual form* - a moving state in the "actual course of time" in which the real objects (or beings or events) manifest themselves²²¹ and which can be recorded and brought back. In the context of our analysis it seems that this factuality of time transfers the real of reality in film, which is further to be named *the real of reproduction*. In what follows, this real, the aforementioned presence of CP Harey, her being, is going to be compared to the idea of presence (of absence) in Cavell and Heidegger. To be exact:

²¹⁹ Martin Heidegger, *op. cit.*, p. 290

²²⁰ Here Cavell is close to Pasolini who asserts: "So the question is: what is the difference between the cinema and reality? Practically none. I realized that the cinema is a system of signs whose semiology corresponds to a possible semiology of the system of signs of reality itself." (Cf. Pier Paolo Pasolini, *op. cit.*, p. 29)

²²¹ Andrei Tarkovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 63

Cavell's idea of being or presence is actually based on Heidegger, whom he quotes: "The word [being] says: presence of what is present."²²² But what exactly does this mean? The Heideggerian interpretation of *being as presence* is actually an ambiguous and even misleading concept: he distinguishes the "present" and "the presence of what is present".

Heidegger's idea of being is based on the ancient Greek *par/ousía*, translated into German as "Anwesenheit" (presence), originating from a pre-ontological sense, for Heidegger consisting in a "Being-at" -"Da-Sein" (not to be confounded with Dasein from *Being and Time*). The translator of *Being and Time* explains in this context:

The noun *ousia* is derived from one of the stems used in conjugating the irregular verb *eimai* ('to be'); in the Aristotelian tradition it is usually translated as 'substance', though translators of Plato are more likely to write 'essence', 'existence', or 'being'. Heidegger suggests that *ousia* is to be thought of as synonymous with the derivative noun *parousia* ('being at', 'presence'). As he points out, *parousia* has a close etymological correspondence with the German 'Anwesenheit'.²²³

The being-at of *parousía* means a quotidian comprehension, being present in the sense of being at your disposition, "lying-before-us"²²⁴, being there as a practical use for now. For the ancient Greeks, says Heidegger, "entities are grasped in their Being as 'presence'; this means that they are understood with regard to a definite mode of time – the 'Present; that is they are conceived as presence.'"²²⁵ This being present also means being close: "The Greeks do not conceive of being present and abiding primarily in terms of mere duration. (...)To be present is to come close by (*an-wesen*), to be here in contrast and conflict with to be away (*ab-wesen*)."²²⁶

However, Heidegger still distinguishes another type of *presence*: the

²²² Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, p. 235

²²³ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 47

²²⁴ Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, p. 236

²²⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 48

²²⁶ Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, p. 236

“presence of what is present”²²⁷. This is the presence of CP Harey, which goes *beyond* the present moment. This kind of presence is for Heidegger to be distinguished from the presence in the present because presence cannot be reduced to one mode of time: “It would be a mistake, (...) for us to take the view that Being of beings meant merely, for all time, the presence of what is present.”²²⁸ This “presence itself” is a concept, which Graham Harman develops further by referring to a withdrawing real object (“the third table”²²⁹), by relying on Heidegger’s “readiness-to-hand”²³⁰. As a matter of fact, Heidegger sets the presence of what is present as something withdrawing from thinking. We cannot even be sure of its disclosure:

(I)t is no assurance that such thinking will also clothe the presence of what is present, in words, with all possible clarity and in every respect. Even more, it remains undecided whether in the "presence of what is present" there will appear That which constitutes the presence of what is present.”²³¹

Even so, according to Heidegger the “presence itself” always remains:

Presence itself is precisely the presence of what is present, and remains so even if we specifically stress its various traits. (...) The other traits in the Being of beings – the objectivity of the object which we mentioned, the reality of the real – are nonetheless still constituted in the fundamental character of presence.²³²

At another point of his work Heidegger explains that “Anwesenheit” as *parousía* also includes in it the word “Anwesen”, which is literally translated as possession or house, evoking a sense of permanence. “Presence means: the consistent dwelling [Verweilen], concerning Man, reaching him, handed for

²²⁷ Ibid., p. 235

²²⁸ Ibid., p. 235

²²⁹ See: Graham Harman, *The Third Table*

²³⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 99

²³¹ Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, p. 237

²³² Ibid., p. 237

him.”²³³ This claim evokes a sense of being *permanently* present in time, different from referring only to the present, but to time, which in Heidegger’s understanding is threefold, consisting in the unity of three ecstases²³⁴: “We (...) call the phenomena of the future, the character of having been, and the Present, the ‘ecstases’ of temporality.”²³⁵ Therefore, even in the present, the two other ecstases remain, although absent – a presence of absence. Yet Heidegger calls attention to the fact that “What is characteristic of the ‘time’ which is accessible to the ordinary understanding, consists, among other things, precisely in the fact that it is a pure sequence of “nows”, (...) in which the ecstatical character of primordial temporality has been leveled off.”²³⁶

Presence of what is present evokes time in its threefoldness (or better: a dwelling in time) for Heidegger, and thereby also the opposite of “Anwesen”, which is the “Abwesen” – which can be translated into English as the process of perishing as much as absence. But this absence, just as Cavell has been observing for photography, still contains a presence it refers to - to come back to Tarkovsky’s term “factuality”. Heidegger argues in this sense: “this not-present-any-more is immediately present in its absence [*west in seinem Abwesen unmittelbar an*]”²³⁷.²³⁸ We can only conceive something as absent, if we know what its presence is like – that is why its “Wesen” (essence) remains in “Abwesen” (decaying) as well as in “Anwesen”, yet as a dynamic relationship.

Being as presence itself thus implies the possibility of its own not-being-any-more, which in film is a permanence, corresponding to Heidegger’s

²³³ Martin Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*, p. 13 [translation mine – C.R.]

²³⁴ “Temporality is not, prior to this, an entity which first emerges from *itself*; its essence is a process of temporalizing in the unity of the ecstases.” (C.f. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 377)

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 377

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 377

²³⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*, p. 13 [translation mine – C.R.]

²³⁸ The next step for Heidegger, as time and being are threefold to him, is to recall the sense of future presence in the absence. This aspect of not-yet-being will play a role in the solaristic system when it comes to the principle of projection, yet it goes beyond the scope of this chapter.

sense of dwelling presence and implying its absence. *Being-in-film* is this dwelling of that which is not-being-any-more, just as *being-on-Solaris* is a transcendental locus of those who are absent. This dwelling in film we will call the presence of what has been present – this is another expression for the real of reality.

Again: *being-in-film* is *being-in-death*, which is a *being-without-being*. Heidegger stresses that the signification of *being-in-the-world* entails completeness; “[a] structure that is primordially and constantly whole.”²³⁹ A fundamental problem for Heidegger is grasping *being-in-the-world* as a whole: death is also that which transforms Dasein’s Being into a *whole*, in the sense of concluding it. Heidegger further points out, that this *being-as-a-whole* can never be ontically experienced by Dasein: “When Dasein reaches its wholeness in death, it simultaneously loses the Being of its ‘there’.”²⁴⁰ Film conveys thus the impossible death-vision of Dasein as a whole: the romantic longing for death may have helped concretize the technical invention of film, as will be further elucidated.

Our inquiry into the presence of the absent evoked by film can thus be read as the presence of Dasein’s being after death: the whole of being as a ‘being-after-death’ emerges as a possibility of Dasein, unique to the filmic device. Death and being-towards-death are central in the narrative of “Solaris”: Harey embodies a *being-without-being*, but all her aspiration is to change her being into a being-towards-death, a being involved with the possibility of its own absence, and not being an absence referring to the presence itself: she wants to change her presence to correspond with the present mode of time. Similarly to Tarkovsky, filmmaker Hans-Jürgen Syberberg claims film to be the “continuation of life with other means and not the mirror of life”²⁴¹ and in this sense we can understand the material transcendence of film: not by referring to an otherworldly entity, but by being

²³⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 225

²⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 281

²⁴¹ “Der Film ist die Fortsetzung des Lebens mit anderen Mitteln und nicht der Spiegel des Lebens.” (Cf. Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, “Film als Musik der Zukunft”, in: *Syberbergs Filmbuch*, p. 12)

inhabited by the factuality of life (beings, objects or events) which *is not anymore*.

In conclusion: the aforementioned principle of *presence of absence* refers to a spectral and death-driven characterization of film. It also describes the filmic principle of transcendence of matter. The idea of the *presence of that which is not anymore* thereby evokes a *transcendental materiality* of film, “as light as light”²⁴². The Latin word *solaris* means “of the sun” and although covered by a fluid and waterlike surface Solaris is the planet of light, which beams beings and being. In “Solaris” the visitors embody a materiality different from humans, although rematerialized.

Before inquiring further into the idea of transcendence of matter and the material quality of light, let me draw an allusion to transcendental materialism. As I will demonstrate, the reflection on and through film may reveal an aesthetic perspective, which has not yet been explored: to access in film a *transcendent mode of reality* through an immaterial kind of being, residing in the real of reproduction, unfolding the aforementioned “new relationship to the real itself”, which Alain Badiou, who has inspired this chapter so far, finds so promising.

3. From Badiou’s Ontology of the Void to the White Hole of the Whole of Images

How can the idea of a *transcendental real of reproduction*, simultaneously present although absent and immaterial in its being, best be verbalized? And what exactly is the real Alain Badiou is referring to and which has lead us to think about the real in film? In the context of this analysis it is not possible to do justice to Badiou’s elaborated ontological materialism, which he develops

²⁴² Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.*, p. 24

in the two volumes of *Being and Event*. I will therefore raise two central yet (cor)related concepts in his thought, which are important for our context: the ontology of multiplicity and the void of Lacan's concept of the Real.

Performing a radical step Badiou fuses the set theory of mathematician Georg Cantor with Heideggerian ontology²⁴³ and claims that "mathematics = ontology"²⁴⁴. He thus transforms the *ontological question of being* into a matter of mathematics, an ontological thinking in which "the mathematico-logical revolution of Frege-Cantor sets new orientation for thought."²⁴⁵ Badiou suggests that the mathematics of set theory rule out the paradox one-multiple of being and finds a way to postulate multiplicity as an axiom, a condition of being itself. Being is for Badiou not 'one' and also not 'one multiple'²⁴⁶ because 'one' simply is not. The number 'one' functions as an operational idea to count, a point of reference, but not as an absolute entity²⁴⁷. Therefore the idea of 'multiple' is to be understood not as one entity but rather as "a multiple of multiples".²⁴⁸ Being thus is *infinite multiplicity* for Badiou, an idea grounded in Cantor's set theory where *absolutely infinite multiplicity* is designated as *inconsistent*²⁴⁹.

Badiou stresses that this inconsistency, according to Cantor, refers to an absolute or pure *non-being* and further represents the idea of the

²⁴³ "Along with Heidegger, it will be maintained that philosophy as such can only be re-assigned on the basis of the ontological question." (Cf. Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 2)

²⁴⁴ Ibid., p.6

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 2

²⁴⁶ "(B)eing is neither one (because only presentation itself is pertinent to the count-as-one), nor multiple (because the multiple is *solely* the regime of presentation)." (Cf. *ibid.*, p. 24)

²⁴⁷ "The decision can take no other form than the following: the one *is not*. (...) What has to be declared is that the one, which is not, solely exists as *operation*. In other words: there is no one, only the count-as-one. The one, being an operation, is never a presentation. It should be taken quite seriously that the 'one' is a number." (Cf. *ibid.*, pp.23-24)

²⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 29

²⁴⁹ Badiou quotes Cantor: "On the one hand, a multiplicity may be such that the affirmation according to which *all* its elements 'are together' leads to a contradiction, such that it is impossible to conceive the multiplicity as a unity, as a 'finite thing'. These multiplicities, I name them *absolutely infinite multiplicities*, or *inconsistent*." (Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 41-42)

unthinkable, evoking God for Cantor. Like God, “the Absolute can only be acknowledged but never known”²⁵⁰. Therefore, Badiou argues, the multiplicity of being is to be named as the void²⁵¹ and consequently ontology “can *only* be theory of the void.”²⁵²

Transferring this concept of being into the solaristic system means that the multiple being as a void reflects the being-without-being on Solaris as well as the death-driven being-in-film. That being is multiple and non-being, or better, that being is not and it has no structure, further means that there is no difference between being-in-the-world and being-in-film. The void of being in film is just a more obvious void, as it is immaterial and infinitely multiple. Non-being in film is thus a possibility of the multiplicity of being, and so is the reproduction of being: infinite reproducibility is no contradiction with multiple being as a void. CP Harey is then the embodiment of being as a void.

Why is this conception of being as an unthinkable infinite multiple void further relevant for our context? Because, grounded in Cantor, thinking the real for Badiou presents a way to think the impossible:

I think that the impossible is precisely the name of the Real. (...) We can perfectly have the conclusion that something of the Real can be known under the condition of a displacement concerning the limitations of possibility and impossibility. Part of what is impossible can be known if the separation between what is impossible and what is possible changes.²⁵³

As I have been arguing, film may be one (im)possible tool for thinking such a real in terms of its reproduction: the reproduction of reality through film “opens a new access to the Real as such”, as it gives a new relation “between what is impossible and what is possible”.

²⁵⁰ Georg Cantor, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen mathematischen und Philosophischen Inhalts*, p. 205

²⁵¹ Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 52

²⁵² Ibid., p. 57

²⁵³ Alain Badiou, *The Critique of Critique: Critical Theory as a New Access to the Real*, (available online)

As it is widely known, Badiou's approach to the real is anchored in Jacques Lacan's writing, who has coined a wide-spread contemporary reflection on this real in philosophy. Yet the real was a popular term among philosophers at the beginning of the 20th century, such as Émile Meyerson, who is mentioned in a 1936 paper by the early Lacan. Meyerson referred to the real as "an ontological absolute, a true being-in-itself"²⁵⁴. Lacan himself has changed his positions on the real throughout his thinking, and in this first brief approach, I will start with the best known position. Lacan has also called the real "the impossible" because imagining or grasping it symbolically is impossible: "The Real is that, which resists symbolization absolutely."²⁵⁵ It further is a void because "it is the world of words that creates the world of things"²⁵⁶. This void, as we have seen before, has been set by Badiou as "the proper name for being"²⁵⁷. An equivalence between being and the real is thereby drawn. The real of reality or the being of reality is then what is conveyed by the "transference of reality" in film, as mentioned by Bazin, "from the thing to its reproduction"²⁵⁸.

The idea of Cantor's absolute infinite might have had an influence as a parallel contemporary current to the theoretical rise of the real at the beginning of the XXth century: both, the infinite and the real, are impossible to think, yet are evoking the absolute and can be grasped as a void (this is again Badiou's reading of Cantor). Lacan even suggests a mathematical formalization, the "matheme", as a way to reveal the real, although integrated in the subject. As Badiou summarizes: "Lacan, whose obsession with mathematics did nothing but grow with time, also indicated that pure logic was 'the science of the real'. Yet the real remains a category of the subject."²⁵⁹

²⁵⁴ Dylan Evans, *An Encyclopedia of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, p. 162

²⁵⁵ Jacques Lacan, *op. cit.*, p. 66

²⁵⁶ Jacques Lacan, "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis", in: *Écrits. A Selection*, p. 65

²⁵⁷ Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 52

²⁵⁸ André Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, p. 14

²⁵⁹ Alain Badiou, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5

The Lacanian idea maintained by Badiou to set the real inside the subject indicates one more reason for why film is so especially suitable for this inquiry on being and reality: *film is the pure being of subjectivity* (which is a void), yet in objectified form: it is recorded and reproducible; its material quality discloses an immateriality under very specific conditions of projection. When this reproduction as projection occurs, we immerse into the screened reality (which might be digital or not). Based on mechanical reproduction, film thus constitutes a post-human way to simultaneously be inside reality and being, and stand outside them, a way to think x^{260} from outside of x , *a shift for human thought*.

The happenings on the planet Solaris reflect this techno-ontological possibility: in a cosmic dimension we are simultaneously inside and outside Kelvin's being. The solaristic principle of being without being, or of that, which is not there now, describes film's immanent transcendence of matter. Being remains without structure and as a multiplicity which is a void, in the same logic as Lacan refers to the real - it is there without being there. Simultaneously, this transcendent non-being of film reveals the transcendental condition of being: the void of being, its pure non-being. In this void of being resides the real of reproduction, a filmic and solaristic form of being, transcending matter, reproducible as a void.

Yet let me briefly sketch another approach to that which is reproduced of being in film, based also on the idea that the Lacanian "real remains a category of the subject"²⁶¹, yet going one step further than Badiou by assuming a material side of being, whose transcendence can be compared to the immateriality of film. Adrian Johnston speaks of a "more-than-materiality" of the subject, which not only fits the being-in-film but also the visitors on Solaris, regarding their presence-of-absence condition of being. As Johnston

²⁶⁰ Here we refer to the *Kantian transcendental subject of thought, the unknown = x* , "on which the understanding depends when it believes itself to discover beyond the concept of A a predicate that is foreign to it yet which it nevertheless believes to be connected with it." (Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B14, p. 143)

²⁶¹ Alain Badiou, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5

puts it: "Transcendental materialism posits, in short, a self-sundering material ground internally producing what (subsequently) transcends it."²⁶²

This definition given by Johnston can be applied to a characterization of film as a medium grasping that which transcends the material ground of being or reality, although produced by it. Let us thereby think of film not as a reproduction of being but as a grasping of that which material being has produced and which transcends it. This materialist reading would argue that it is not being which is a multiple void and therefore reproducible, but rather propose that there is an immaterial and subjective part of being which transcends the material side, although produced by it, and which can be grasped by film. In this case, being in film would not be the same as being in the world, the latter understood in a material way, whereas the first as a transcendent entity.

Concerning such transcendent immateriality of film we can speak in the materialist approach of a "more-than-material negativity" that is either *of* film or possibly disclosed *by* film; a negativity, which, in Johnston's words, "subsequently remains, at least in part, separate from and irreducible to its material base/ground."²⁶³ This negative being, which fits CP Harey in "Solaris", presents further characteristics which provide a deeper characterization of Harey's *being-without-being*: "There are indeed facets of more-than-material subjectivity entangled in reciprocal oscillating configurations of movement with material being [...] as well as facets of subjectivity that subtract themselves from and achieve autonomy in relation to being [...]"²⁶⁴ Although removed from its context of reflection, Johnston's position describes aptly the state of affairs on the planet Solaris, thereby evoking a subjectivity or being which, although displaced from its material ground, is graspable through film.

The material quality of film - "as light as light"²⁶⁵ - becomes then next issue. How does the idea of a more-than-material negativity of film fit the

²⁶² Adrian Johnston, *Žižek's Ontology: A Transcendental Materialist Theory of Subjectivity*, p. 61

²⁶³ Ibid., p. 280

²⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 280

²⁶⁵ Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.*, p. 24

quality of light? What is light? And how are light and the photographic (moving) image related? Solaris is a sun-light-beaming planet generating beings from memory or dream images via radiation. Common sense grasps light as different from matter yet dependent on space, which carries light in form of images. Space is dependent on light, in the sense that it is light which makes space appear and disappear. In physics imagery or radiation is only one property of light – light that has this property is called “visible light” and is to be distinguished from “invisible light” constantly travelling and all around, a void entity comparable to the Lacanian Real or the multiple being referred by Badiou.

Constant movement of invisible light evokes radiation or visible light, exactly when light *beats* matter: visible light or image thus is an event or fissure of the invisible light. Invisible light thus implies an *infinity of possible images*. It is a void at the same time that it is multiplicity. To the *event of the image* the *visibility of matter* is immanent. *Light confronting matter thus constantly beams images* and is to be understood as a fractural event: it is only possible to perceive the image in space and time from one point of view at one certain moment. Its being lies in permanence while it becomes real in the fracture. Every image is just a single slice, a fissure, out of the whole of all possible images, which is a void whose fissure with materiality causes transcendence: image. The void of invisible light is then the potential of all possible images; not a black hole of dark, but a *white hole of the whole of possible images*, the void before the invisible photons, which when fissured by matter, transform into images, perceivable from one subjective point of view, and negative towards being. As Slavoj Žižek says: “The flow of light “in itself” is nothing actual, but, rather, the pure virtuality of infinite possibilities actualized in a multitude of ways.”²⁶⁶ I will follow this statement up in Chapter XIV by introducing the Deleuzian concept of the virtual into the scope of analysis.

In a Bergsonian sense of ‘image = matter’ it is possible to assert that matter becomes a quality of light, which is constantly creating new matter or new images out of an aggregate of images, an absolutely infinite set of

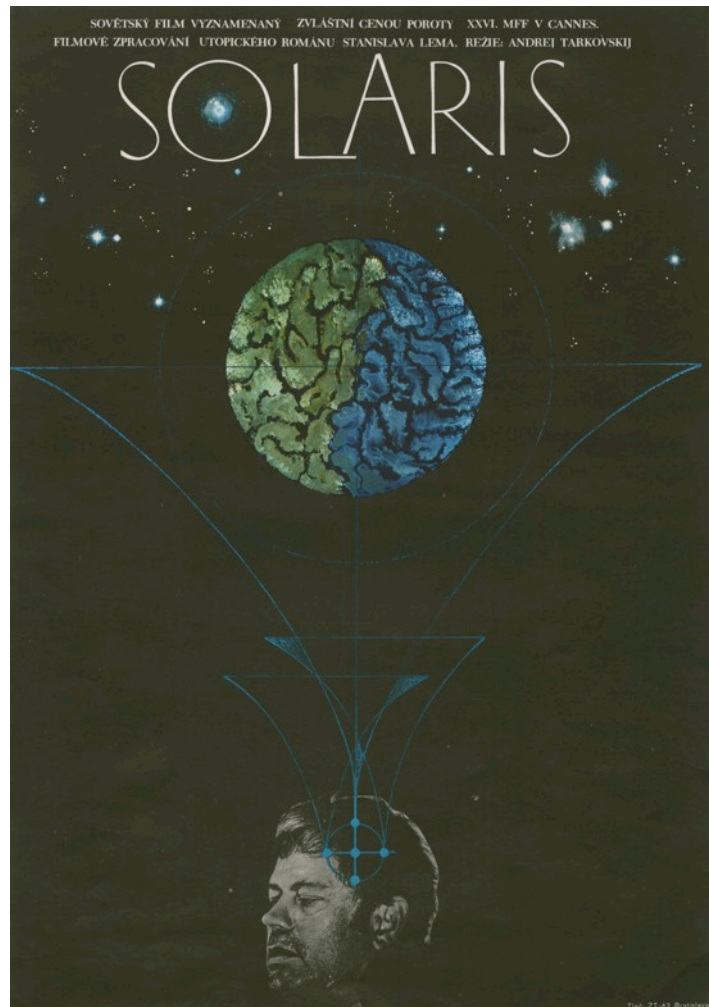
²⁶⁶ Slavoj Žižek, *Organs Without Bodies*, p.4

possible images: a white hole of the whole of images. This white whole of invisible light can be understood as a transcendental field, comparable to a *more-than-material* infinite, or as a void. This whole is not a totality, but the images would become one, if they would all be visible.

In this sense, like on the planet Solaris, light can make physical reality appear and disappear and it is first the photographic and then – which is even more complicated - the filmic image, which grasps this contingent and virtual character of an infinitely multiple reality.

PART 3

SOLARISTIC IMPLICATIONS



This part of analysis is a completion of many of the aspects elaborated so far, acting out some of its possible ramifications, deepening Heidegger's relevance for the solaristic system and enlarging it with further specifications. Thereby Barad's quantum ontology, Benjamin's cine-apparatus and his concept of technology, Bostrom's "simulation hypothesis", Harman's hypothesis of indirect knowledge of the real and Žižek's claim to consider subjectivity a part of totality, even if an incomplete one, are introduced within a solaristic frame.

The chapters further start with the Deleuzian idea of 'the universe as metacinema', in other words: 'the world as film', to unfold a chain of leading interrogations: How can we conceptually distinguish the images of film and the ones of natural perception? How is the neologism being-in-film exactly deduced from Heidegger's being-in-the-world, and what does it mean in detail? And how became this way of escaping the world established? Furthermore, are we leaving for Solaris because we are longing for suicide? How can we compare being-in-film with being-in-death? And can we be sure that we are not living in a film or any other kind of apparatus driven simulation? Which kind of apparatus is the planet Solaris? How does the solaristic brain entangle matter and meaning? How can subjectivity be part of truth? And is love the solaristic way to indirectly know that which is not possible to be known?

This widespread web of related interrogations is meant to create insight into the numerous possibilities of enlarging the solaristic system, to better understand its way of reasoning and to add some flesh to its skeleton. The complexity of the range of questions serves to create the necessity of a systematizing conclusion, which is the main endeavor of the last part of analysis.

XI.
MAN'S BROKEN LINK WITH REALITY
AND *BEING-IN-FILM*

1. The Real Image and the Broken Link

The ideas of the '*a whole*' and '*a totality*' lie close together, yet are two distinct terms differing in their meaning. A *totality* imposes a completeness which is an absolute: it can neither be escaped nor reached; it substantially differs from a whole – *holos* in Greek. The *whole* refers to a unity, which is reached by the composition of components, for example several parts of one body, or the world as a whole. Wholeness is often conveyed through narrative: every whole has a beginning, a middle and an ending, just as Aristotle underlines in his "Poetics". Life and films reach wholeness in this sense, to be completed by their ending, which is death. Only the infinite does not end. Yet according to Georg Cantor its term is manifest as an absolute, and as such it is "unthinkable", as we have seen: yet it is as much unthinkable as is the finite as an experience. This kind of absolute infinite is to be found in the origins of cinema as the wishful thinking of a reproduction of *reality itself* (the one that does not exist), the idea of a simultaneous *presence of all possible images*. Bazin calls it *the myth of total cinema*, which he introduces as a film, which would substitute and re-create the world in its integrity:

The *guiding myth*, then, inspiring the invention of cinema, is the accomplishment of (...) an integral realism, a recreation of the world in its own image, an image unburdened by the freedom of interpretation of the artist or the irreversibility of time.²⁶⁷

Let me try to understand this quote by transposing Bazin's thought into the solaristic system. His idea of an image so absolute that it is "unburdened by the freedom of interpretation of the artist" presupposes a fusion between the real as an infinite absolute and the subject. This fusion happens in form of an image: not an image of the real, but *the real image*, the real of reality in its totality as an image, a film of all possible images, the white whole of all possible images, not as a possibility, but as an actuality. This real image, composed by an infinite number of images (as we have defined with Henri Bergson) naturally resembles Cantor's absolute infinite, and tends towards it in terms of time as well: time becomes reversible in its infinity, in its totality. We can visit the past "just as it was", in all its images of actualization, or slow it down, change natural perception. This total image is conceived as an ideal possibility of cinema relying on Bazin who has emphasized that cinema's origin is rather to be considered as a primordial idea than as a technical invention: "The cinema is an idealistic phenomenon. The concept men had of it existed so to speak fully armed in their minds, as if in some platonic heaven."²⁶⁸ Furthermore, for Bazin "Cinema has not yet been invented."²⁶⁹— which means the *idea of cinema*, put into terms by his description of the myth of total cinema, is not fulfilled by what had been technically invented as cinema; the myth is depicting the recreation of the whole of reality and to be experienced similar to how phenomenological reality is. These are very high expectations for a medium, whose most intriguing characteristic consists in its mesmerizing, hypnotic possession of the spectator's mind, so absorbing, that the physical body is forgotten, the physical reality substituted and the spectator's identity dissolved (an aspect to be elaborated in the next chapter).

²⁶⁷ André Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, p. 21

²⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 17

²⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 21

In fact, even the contemporary audiovisual glasses are still on their way to total cinema, and to be considered next steps.



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In the movie “Solaris” we are faced with a possibility of such a total image of cinema, which has become actual. The visitors announce that which the islands of memory later achieve: “the re-creation of the world in its own image” and the freedom from “the irreversibility of time” – time is reversible on Solaris. The planet has sensed the human real of reality through memories, implying its projections and desires. The planet is tending towards a total cinema, corresponding to the human longing to overcome linear perception. The visitors are our own images in their total potential, whereas the planet is the whole of images of total cinema, of all possible images becoming actual.

However, Bazin’s evocation of total cinema has been inverted into a skeptical hypothesis employed by Deleuze in *The Time-Image*: modern man no longer believes in the world and faces it as if watching a (bad) movie:

“The modern fact is that we no longer believe in this world. (...) It is not I who make cinema; it is the world that looks to us like a bad film. (...) The link between man and the world is broken.”²⁷¹

Even if Deleuze here describes the human relation to the world as a “bad film” in which we cannot believe any more, he relies on the idea of the

²⁷⁰ http://www.prweb.com/releases/iMovee_Cineplus/Video_Glasses/prweb2319504.htm

²⁷¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, p. 166

world as metacinema, which he earlier develops in *The Movement-Image* drawing on Bergson:

This infinite set of all images constitutes a kind of plane of immanence. The image exists in itself, on this plane. This in-itself of the image is matter (...) . The material universe, the plane of immanence, is the machinic assemblage of movement-images. Here Bergson is startlingly ahead of his time: it is the universe as cinema in itself, a metacinema.²⁷²

The planet Solaris aims this “infinite set of all images”, “the material universe” or “the plane of immanence” as a total re-creation, just as the movie “Solaris” does to film. However, Deleuze states here that the plane of immanence is already a metacinema. If so, what would be the difference between a film and reality? Cavell has answered, as we have seen before: the difference would be its displacement in time, but Deleuze actually gives another answer: his “metacinema” corresponds to Bazin’s real image, the totality of all possible images becoming actual, and its re-creation is the myth of total cinema, a tendency that cannot be achieved. Therefore the difference between reality and film designated in Deleuzian terms would be that a film is part of the plane of immanence, even a plane of immanence itself, but it is not the infinite set of all images. A film is finite.

Furthermore, I have previously described how Pier Paolo Pasolini identifies a one-to-one relation of film (as audiovisual reproduction) and reality— not as a matter of perception but rather quite literally: “Reality is, in the final analysis, nothing more than cinema in nature”²⁷³. Deleuze concedes the point to Pasolini by recalling the important passage in Bergson’s *Matter and Memory* where he conflates image and object through movement: “If movement is taken from the moving body, there is no longer any distinction between image and object.”²⁷⁴ Additionally Deleuze refers to Pasolini’s “ur-code” of cinematic language in which “the objects of reality have become units

²⁷² Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, p.61

²⁷³ Pier Paolo Pasolini, *op. cit.*, p. 198

²⁷⁴ Cf. Henri Bergson, referred by Deleuze in: Gilles Deleuze, *op.cit.*, p. 26

of the image, at the same time that the movement-image has become a reality which 'speaks' through its objects"²⁷⁵. Without the slightest skepticism Pasolini states, "All of life in the entirety of its actions is a natural, living film".²⁷⁶

In any case, whether this film of life has become bad and senseless or not, Deleuze is aware of how a technical invention has imposed itself on natural perception, proposing such a powerful form of viewing the world, that the world and its perception is compared to the experience of watching a film. Therefore Deleuze calls the Bergsonian universe of images in movement a metacinema. Bergson would not have approved of this view, but the emergence of cinema as a mass medium, which has become omnipresent and imposed on perception, was not yet part of Bergson's experience when he wrote 1896 *Matter and Memory*, in a time when cinema was still in a primordial state. With his idea of metacinema Deleuze himself becomes a symptom of how the perception of film has become more relevant than natural perception, which seems less real, less present, so argues Walter Benjamin 1935:

Thus, for contemporary man the presentation of reality by the film is incomparably more significant (...), since it offers, precisely because of the thoroughgoing permeation of reality with mechanical equipment, an aspect of reality, which is free of all equipment. And that is what one is entitled to ask from a work of art.²⁷⁷

Benjamin anticipates here a contemporary phenomenon of reception of moving-image media, and is therefore often referred to as the "father" of media aesthetics. Who has not had the experience of having seen a film a sequence from which has remained with one for the rest of one's days, sometimes more persistent, more real, than the memory of a sequence from life? Memories of life and images from movie scenes further mix in our mind. How has this patchwork of images of reality called cinema so powerfully imposed on natural

²⁷⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Ibid.*, p. 27

²⁷⁶ Pier Paolo Pasolini, *op.cit.*, p. 203

²⁷⁷ Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility", Third Version, p. 234

view and aesthetic reception? In accordance with our context I propose to read Benjamin's "immediate reality" as a synonym for the *real of reality*, which becomes graspable through film in a concrete way:

In the studio the mechanical equipment [*Apparatur* in German, a word kept in other English versions as 'apparatus'] has penetrated so deeply into reality that its pure aspect freed from the foreign substance of the equipment [again Benjamin refers here to an 'apparatus'] is the result of a special procedure, namely, the shooting by the specially adjusted camera and the mounting of the shot together with other similar ones. The equipment-free aspect of reality here has become the height of artifice; the sight of immediate reality has become an orchid in the land of technology.²⁷⁸

Since this understanding of film is a special catalyst for the manifestation of the real of reality, it reflects the idea of the *solaristic claim of the real image*, which has already been discussed throughout this thesis, yet without being spelled out yet. This claim runs as follows: *the real of reality manifests itself in film and becomes graspable for human knowledge through film.*

Benjamin further argues that filmic reality "diminishes the distance"²⁷⁹ (is thus more present in the Heideggerian sense of "lying-before-us") and indulged the significance of contemporary mass society, "namely: *the desire of the present-day masses to bring things 'closer' spatially and humanly*"²⁸⁰ as well as their "bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality [Überwindung des Einmaligen in der Gegebenheit] by accepting its reproduction."²⁸¹ The filmic reproduction of reality then becomes convenient for a mesmerizing substitution of reality and provokes a reliance on the virtual reality of film, a tendency, which has been increasing during the last 100 years. On *Solaris*, the equipment of interpenetration is the planet itself, its capacity of sensing the

²⁷⁸ Walter Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 233

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 233

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 223

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 233

remembered human past – the consistent, more real side of time, according to Tarkovsky:

Time is said to be irreversible. And this is true enough in the sense that “you can’t bring back the past”, as they say. But what exactly is this “past”? (...) In a certain sense the past is far more real, or at any rate more stable, more resilient than the present. The present slips and vanishes like sand between the fingers, acquiring material weight in its recollection.²⁸²

Therefore the planet can literally materialize the weight of the past, just as cinema can, and necessarily, this past then appears as more real than the present. In this sense the film is strikingly in the spirit of Heidegger, who even uses the word “facticity” to describe the *having been*, which constantly forms the “is” of Dasein:

“Dasein never ‘finds itself’ except as a thrown Fact. In the *state-of-mind in which it finds itself*, Dasein is assailed by itself as the entity which it still is and already was – that is to say, which it constantly *is* as having been. The primary existential meaning of facticity lies in the character of ‘having been’.”²⁸³

However, why should we still choose the reality of natural perception if the real of reality lies elsewhere, in the infinite of possibilities, and even becomes more graspable there? Are we not just permanently switching? Is our natural perception at all trustable, believable? Our relation towards reality has changed: that which Deleuze calls the link between modern man and the world has broken - because (even if Deleuze names other reasons) under the influence of film, of reproduced past, we feel reality as it surrounds us a mere contingency of the real; reality is one film which wakes the longing for total cinema, for the absolute, real image, but cannot achieve it.

Deleuze, in the context of the world being film, mentions *belief* as the only link between man and the world and refers to a “turning-point in philosophy, (...)”

²⁸² Andrei Tarkovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 58

²⁸³ Martin Heidegger, *op. cit.*, p. 376

to replace the model of knowledge with belief.”²⁸⁴ Deleuze here refers to a crisis of truth in philosophy²⁸⁵, which could be formulated in our context as follows: *I need to believe into the actual film of reality in order to make it real, because my knowledge does not make sense of it.* To make it real implies: to create sense, create a whole. Deleuze attributes this capacity to cinema, to restore the belief in the world, which is out of sync:

The link between man and the world is broken. Henceforth, this link must become an object of belief. (...) The reaction of which man has been dispossessed can be replaced only by belief. Only belief in the world can reconnect man to what he sees and hears. The cinema must film, not the world, but belief in this world, our only link.²⁸⁶

That is why Deleuze is analyzing cinema in such detailed way, as he hopes for a renewal, a salvation of philosophy itself²⁸⁷. In “Solaris” we believe in the image, the visitors are the gateway to the real of the planet. This real is somehow accessed from a different point of view than on Earth: the fact that time is reverted, that memory-images regain actuality, changes the idea of the whole. Facing this possibility of accessing the real of reality (as a totality) through real images, the naturally perceived reality has lost its magic power: for main character Kris Kelvin, the link with the world has broken, so everything seems empty and meaningless: he longs for total cinema, he longs to love the real image of Harey, he even longs for suicide. Does “Solaris” show “belief in this world”? The answer is yes, precisely if we accept the planet Solaris as a catalyst of the real image, as well as a part of this world.

I propose for what follows to leave the aforementioned turn from knowledge to belief and instead proceed from and reassess Deleuze’s *claim of the broken link*, to reconsider it not from a perspective of belief or disbelief but

²⁸⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2 : The Time Image*, p. 166

²⁸⁵ See: Mirjam Schaub, *Gilles Deleuze im Kino: das Sichtbare und das Sagbare*, p. 281

²⁸⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *op. cit.*, p. 166

²⁸⁷ Compare chapter VII of our introduction, “A Short History of Philosophy of Film”, as well as: Mirjam Schaub, *op. cit.*, pp. 280

to ask precisely how the broken link *affects us* and what does this affecting mean, in Heideggerian terms. The Deleuzian claim correlates reality and film while simultaneously inquiring into the meaning of man's altered relation to the world; that is, man's evolution into a *spectator of reality*. The tie, the link with the world, evoking its presence and realness, became a contingency. We can choose: reality is a range of different films, and one of them is the film of our life. Yet what would be the philosophical consequences of assuming that we *live (in) a movie*? I have attempted to expose how this question goes deeper than the concern about seeing the world as a moving flow, with no material body or personal consequences. Now I shall elucidate the concept of *being-in-film*, which is a state of Dasein while watching a movie as it at the same time becomes, in a certain way, a spectator of reality.

2. Being-in-Film

In the following I seek to further explain the transfer of Heidegger's *being-in-the-world*, which entails a multiplicity of possibilities for Dasein, into the neologism *being-in-film*, which we have briefly introduced in earlier chapters. The term designates a state of being which Dasein enters when we watch a movie and the world becomes film. But how can we appropriate the meanings of the concept *being-in-the-world*? Heidegger breaks the term *being-in-the-world* down and develops his own philosophical system which pivots around the following set of correlated terms - *being* and *being-in*, *Dasein*, *the world*, *time* and *death* – which I will elucidate in what follows.

I have already mentioned that being is the leading concept of *Being and Time*, where, for Heidegger, being *is* time. *Dasein* thereby designates the standpoint from which being is analyzed: With "Dasein" Heidegger denotes

both, existence (“Being as essence”²⁸⁸) and the mode of being of every human being. Dasein is therefore ontically the closest of being to us, “We are it, each of us”²⁸⁹. Heidegger further stresses that the word being [*Sein*] in German implies the meaning of dwelling²⁹⁰. He therefore sets Dasein’s existential *being-in* and its essential structure as *being-in-the-world*²⁹¹. For Heidegger Dasein and its environment are inseparable in their existence, world is “a characteristic of Dasein itself”²⁹². Therefore, being is dwelling and the German word *Dasein* designates *being-there*. Thus, the *there* of Dasein is the *world*. Dasein and world are not to be grasped separately which entails that being-in-the-world is not spatial. To guarantee the existence of *one world* shared by all entities (and not only existing for one Dasein) he inquires into “*the worldhood of the world as such*”²⁹³. Heidegger further stresses that the signification of *being-in-the-world* entails completeness: “A structure that is primordially and constantly whole.”²⁹⁴

The fundamental problem for Heidegger is grasping *being-in-the-world* as a whole; it is somehow my ambition here to apply the general structure of this attempt of *grasping-as-a-whole* to film and by that, to the solaristic system. Heidegger’s problem is that in order to experience *being-in-the-world* as a whole, the ending of Dasein must be fulfilled: “As long as Dasein *is* as an entity, it has never reached its ‘wholeness’ But if it gains such ‘wholeness’, this gain becomes the utter loss of Being-in-the-world.”²⁹⁵ Yet Heidegger stresses that “the reason for the impossibility of experiencing Dasein ontically as a *whole which is* [als seiendes Ganzes], and therefore of determining its character ontologically in its Being-a-whole, does not lie in any imperfection of our

²⁸⁸ “The ‘essence’ of Dasein lies in its existence.” (Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 42)

²⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 36

²⁹⁰ “ ‘Being’ [*Sein*] – is the infinitive from I am [*Ich bin*], which also means ‘to reside alongside...’ or ‘to be familiar with’.” (Cf. *ibid.*, p. 80)

²⁹¹ “ ‘Being-in’ is (...) the formal existential expression for the Being of Dasein, which has Being-in-the-world as its essential state.” (Cf. *ibid.*, p. 80)

²⁹² Ibid., p. 92

²⁹³ Ibid., p. 92

²⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 225

²⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 280

cognitive powers [Ekenntnisvermögens].” Rather it lies in the “Being [Sein] of this entity [Seiendes]”.

Despite this blind spot, Dasein “is disclosed to itself in its Being”, whereby “the kind of Being, which belongs to this disclosedness is constituted by state-of-mind and understanding.”²⁹⁶ The state of mind *par excellence* in which Dasein can unfold itself is *anxiety* [Angst]: “As one of Dasein’s possibilities of Being, anxiety—together with Dasein itself as disclosed in it—provides the phenomenal basis for explicitly grasping Dasein’s primordial totality of Being.”²⁹⁷ Although anxiety is a possibility of Dasein, anxiety *in its essence* (necessarily) is *different* from “Dasein’s Being as *being-in-the-world*”. I will address this notion of anxiety below.

Furthermore, to inquire into the world for Heidegger implies to look for that which is *in* the world: the entities within the world alongside Dasein, the *things* and their *thinghood* understood as being *ready-to-hand* or “*present-at-hand* within the world”²⁹⁸. The *spatial quality* of any entity lies in its *being part of the structure of worldhood* and not in an *a priori* condition of space as “the spatial character which incontestably belongs to any environment can be clarified only in terms of the structure of worldhood”²⁹⁹.

As a possibility of Dasein, how does anxiety relate to the world? “Being-in-the-world itself is that in the face of which anxiety [Das Wovor der Angst] is anxious.”³⁰⁰ Thereby “anxiety ‘does not know’ what that in the face of which it is anxious.”³⁰¹ Heidegger distinguishes *anxious in the face of* and *anxiety about* something, while juxtaposing them: “that *about which* anxiety is anxious reveals itself as that in the face of which (...) one has anxiety.”³⁰² The *anxious about something* is thereby undetermined: “That which anxiety is profoundly anxious [sich ängstet] about is not a *definite* kind of Being for Dasein or a *definite*

²⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 226

²⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 227

²⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 90

²⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 94

³⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 231-232

³⁰¹ Ibid., p. 231

³⁰² Ibid., p. 233

possibility for it.”³⁰³ Anxiety is thus for Heidegger anxiousness about “Dasein’s potentiality-for-Being”³⁰⁴, in particular about Dasein’s “ownmost” possibility, which for Heidegger is death, also designated as the *possibility of the impossibility of Dasein*: Death cannot be overcome and will certainly end all Dasein’s possibilities, most particularly as it concerns Dasein’s *being-in-the-world* directly: “With death, Dasein stands before itself in its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. This is a possibility in which the issue is nothing less than Dasein’s Being-in-the-world.”³⁰⁵

According to Heidegger, as we have seen, the mood of anxiety discloses Dasein to itself. Matching this line of reasoning, death is also that which transforms Dasein’s Being into a *whole*, in the sense of concluding it. Yet, as we have seen, Heidegger points out that this *being-as-a-whole* can never be ontically experienced by Dasein: “When Dasein reaches its wholeness in death, it simultaneously loses the Being of its ‘there’”.³⁰⁶ Heidegger’s regard lies therefore on how death affects Dasein: *Being-in-the-world* becomes a *being-towards-death*. This *being-towards* is opened in a mode of “*Being-towards* these possibilities”³⁰⁷ and shifts Dasein from the mood of anxiety to the one of care [*Sorge*]. Being *in concern* is thereby constantly driven by Dasein always being “ahead-of-itself”, although “Being-towards-death is essentially anxiety.”³⁰⁸

This essential openness of the structure of Dasein is exactly “that which makes up the ‘lack of totality’ in Dasein”³⁰⁹, which as “an item in the structure of care, tells us unambiguously that in Dasein there is always something *still outstanding*, which, as a potentiality-for-Being for Dasein itself, has not yet become ‘actual’.”³¹⁰ (The question of the out-standing becoming actual plays a

³⁰³ Ibid., p. 231-232

³⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 295

³⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 294

³⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 281

³⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 279

³⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 310

³⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 288

³¹⁰ Ibid., p. 279

crucial role for the determination of *presence* in the present.) By being “ahead-of-itself” Dasein projects itself upon possibilities, the condition in which it finds itself thrown into Being³¹¹. Dasein projects the (im)possibility of death as something it is inevitably thrown into. Death thereby offers the potentiality of Dasein as *being-towards-death*.

The latter is thereby “the possibility of *authentic existence*” and the possibility of Dasein to understand itself, because “anticipation turns out to be the possibility of understanding one’s ownmost and uttermost potentiality-for-Being”³¹². In *being-towards-death* lies therefore the possibility for Dasein to disclose itself as *being-as-a-whole*, but also to be singularized – death cannot be shared with others: “When it stands before itself in this way, all its relations to any other Dasein have been undone.”³¹³

Before going to our next step and assembling the Heideggerian thinking with our departing question (the Deleuzian broken link with the world), I would like to summarize: Just as in death (when Dasein is not any more), in *anxiety* we can grasp the whole of the *being-in-the-world*, which is disclosed to Dasein as *being-as-a-whole* in the projection of *being-towards-death* (the possibility of an authentic existence). This makes anxiety an especially philosophical mood, one in which the whole is graspable – something otherwise only enabled by the impossible condition, which is when being is not any more. In the following I will argue that in film a similar disclosure happens.

We can grasp the whole of the *being-in-the-world*, as long as *being-in-the-world* is *being-in-film*. This disclosedness has to do with the deathlike nature of film; film is fundamentally closed in itself, forming a whole in the sense we have previously set up.

³¹¹ “(...) thrownness, as a kind of Being, belongs to an entity which in each case is its possibilities, and is them in such a way that it understands itself in these possibilities and in terms of them, projecting itself upon them.” (Cf. *ibid.*, p. 225)

³¹² *Ibid.*, p. 263

³¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 294

3. World as Film and Film as World

What would exactly be the design of a hypothetical *being-in-film*, one that derives from a Heideggerian *being-in-the-world*? To determine *being-in-film* means to substitute the term *the world* with *film*, insofar as the ontological term “‘world’ can become a term for any realm which encompasses a multiplicity of entities: for instance, when one talks of the ‘world’ of a mathematician, ‘world’ signifies the realm of possible objects of mathematics.”³¹⁴ Moreover, and this seems sufficiently relevant to permit such an experimental substitution of film as world:

‘World’ can be understood in another ontical sense —not, however, as those entities which Dasein essentially is not and which can be encountered within-the-world, but rather as that ‘wherein’ a factual Dasein as such can be said to live. ‘World’ has here a pre-ontological existentiell signification.³¹⁵

Dasein’s living in the world becomes then a living in film. If world is film, then worldhood would become filmhood. This filmhood of film is not so different from the worldhood of the world. Most aspects of Heidegger’s setting of being are the same in the world and in film. Let me recall that being remains being and that the real of reality is transferred into film. Yet as we have seen before, that which substantially changes when we assume film as world and finally world as film is the nature of time and of Dasein. *Dasein has doubled by being-in-film*; it is involved twice: as spectator from the outside and as *being-in-film, in film*. As we have further seen, this doubling allows Dasein to experience death without dying. Film is then the possibility of *being-in-death: it changes thus the kind of temporality, from being in having been*.

Film is a *being-in-time*, yet with a different temporality for being and Dasein than the one of the world: the more consistent *having been*. We are beyond the present world-time, although film-time (time in film) is reproduced

³¹⁴ Ibid., p. 93

³¹⁵ Ibid., p. 93

by world-time and simultaneously consumes world-time, thus producing newly *having been*. Film-time furthermore works with ellipses, flashbacks and subjective duration. Compared to world-time it possesses relativity and is analogous to our usual concept of time-travel. In film, years can pass by, while in actuality two hours would have passed. Memory of film-time emerges when the film has concluded: We change from *the being-in Dasein* back to *the outside spectator Dasein*.

But there is a second temporal dimension in film that derives from death as the object of a constant anticipation (*being-towards-death*): this anticipation of *non-being* and *non-time* implements the moment as time's smallest unit. Film comprises photographic stills put in a sequence. In a photographic still, the stoppage of time has occurred, the moment of time has been frozen in presence beyond time; it is *death-time*. In photography we suddenly grasp that which has never been unfolded: A spatial presence of the moment is disclosed through its detachment from natural time. It is known now that in Aristotle *the now* does not belong to time (I will come back to this point later). He sets the now as that which is not. Yet in spite of this negativity the now guarantees the passage from future to past. It is rather mysterious how the photograph transports this moment of the "now" from an original context into the time of the spectator. The now remains non-temporal, beyond time, yet it is present as reproduction —an experience in another time and a presence of absence. A photograph is the anticipation of a moment to be resurrected, yet as *something else*: somehow a doubling of time has occurred.

This idea gets to completion by Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida*. Barthes assumes the photographed moment to be the depicted objects' anticipation of the instant of death. The film negative is assembled out of 24 static pictures per second—applied to Barthes' theory that would be 24 instances of death; Aristotle's *now* would thereby attain the meaning of death. The immediate succession of the next frame creates then an apparent continuity and an illusion of life. The disclosure of death (or the presence of the moment) in film is thus obscured by motion – nonetheless, it is there: We can experience death in film *indirectly*.

In "The Science of Logic" Hegel claims: "Everything reasonable is a closure [Schluss]."³¹⁶ In German the word 'Schluss' encompasses a duplicity: *closure* as completion or ending as well as *conclusion*. Pasolini connects death and film in this Hegelian sense of *conclusion* as a principle of creating sense:

Death does determine life, I feel that, and I've written it, too, in one of my recent essays, where I compare death to film-montage. Once life is finished, it acquires a sense; up to that point it has not got a sense; its sense is suspended and therefore ambiguous... For me, death is the maximum of epicness and myth.³¹⁷

Thus, *death becomes a narrative principle of closure*; it is that which creates narration and sense. Filmhood then is to be characterized as narrative, while worldhood appears as infinite and opened. Our affinity to see the world as film may lie in our own mortality: the ending creates the desire for narrative, the search and need for sense and meaning.

Each one, filmhood and worldhood, are based on a different kind of temporality or processing of time, yet both are temporal. Film-time is then characterized as narrating world-time yet by doing so it relies on death (you can only narrate what is over), just as life does. Each film *implies* its own death. Thus, the world as film and our processing of it as such create narration and sense insofar as they include a conclusion (*Vollendung*). *Being-in-film* as potentiality of Dasein is then the one possibility: Dasein comes to an end, experiences itself the end, *and continues afterwards*; the one, which doesn't lack a whole, the one in which Dasein dies and resurrects permanently. It implies death as well as its negation, since Dasein in the world as film is doubled: it can experience death and even *being-in-death*, as it is both —

³¹⁶ "The closure is thus not only reasonable, but everything reasonable is a closure." (translation mine – C.R.) - "Der Schluß ist daher nicht nur vernünftig, sondern alles Vernünftige ist ein Schluß." (Cf. G.W.F. Hegel, "Drittes Kapitel. Der Schluß", in: *Wissenschaft der Logik*, p. 107)

³¹⁷ Pier Paolo Pasolini, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56

spectator-being and *being-in-film*. As *spectator-being* it accesses film from outside, is *towards-film*. Yet as *being-in-film* it goes inside and can project itself into *being-in-death*.

Therefore, the most important conclusion of this chapter is that *Dasein* can experience *being-in-the-world* as a whole, as long as *being-in-the-world* is *being-in-film*. In film the being of the entity - as a whole - is reached. The assumption "When *Dasein* reaches its wholeness (*Gänze*)³¹⁸ in death, it simultaneously loses the Being of its 'there'"³¹⁹ is no longer true. *Dasein* as *being-in-film* is a kind of self-forgotten existence, where one *Dasein* represses the other one. If the world is film, and film a principle of death, *Dasein* experiences *being-in-film* in a film in a film... - as an infinitely nested dwelling. It only can function if it forgets about its spectator-*Dasein* and immerses itself into *being-in-film*. It becomes another, which simultaneously it is not. *Dasein* is always still there after the film-death, as it has doubled. The spectator-*Dasein* is a *being-towards-film* —but still in the world; it connects the nested films.

This dimension is part of the solaristic system only in a one-sided sense: we are in "Solaris" as we are in any film. The movie does not show any specific self-reflexivity on this point. What it does show is the longing for death. "Solaris" is, in different senses, the projection of death and its anticipation: moment-by-moment, frame-by-frame.

³¹⁸ The German term "*Gänze*", is best translated as "wholeness" and a proper construction by Heidegger, who substantivizes in an own way the adjective "*ganz*" - total or whole; "*Gänze*" has a sense of inner unity and is to be distinguished from "*Ganzheit*", which refers to a larger entity.

³¹⁹ Martin Heidegger, *op.cit.*, p. 281

4. *Being-in* as the Link:

Presence in Reality, Film, Time and Space

Let us return to the starting point of this chapter, to the question about the broken link between Dasein and the world as well as about the world being film. After having sketched a draft of Dasein's *being-in-film*, in which Dasein is *in-film* instead of *in-the-world*, the next step will focus on Dasein who projects the world itself as film. I will argue that Deleuze's problem of the broken link between Dasein and the world-as-film could be reassessed by transferring the issue into Heidegger's system of thought: Deleuze's approach only takes into account the spectator-Dasein, he in fact describes a *being-towards-film*; the Deleuzian problem is that he does not access *being-in-film*, Dasein's most important catalyst of film as world. I will argue that the main question of the link addresses neither film, nor the world, but the "in" of *being-in* to be considered the link of Dasein with one or the other.

I will develop further aspects of this link, which seem to lie within the nature of *time*, raising a question of *actual presence as being-in*. For Heidegger, Being *is* time, experienced by Dasein; Dasein's standpoint on *being-in* is temporality. For Deleuze film is composed of time-images; film is further generally considered the art of time – "Sculpting in Time" as Tarkovsky designates it, for example. A missing link between Dasein and world would then imply a lack of actuality or temporal presence. The following questions emerge: What in time makes the actual *real* be present in both film and world? (This question somehow asks for the real of reality, although it is now applied to the dimension of time.) And what consequences follow from the substitution of world by film, or the becoming film of the world?

Film *is* world and world *is* film in the following two ways: First, we approach existence with an attitude that projects possibilities within the world. Dasein is always 'ahead-of-itself': We project our own being into the future; world and world-projection are interdependent. Film is such a world-projection. The projecting attitude of Dasein is thus an ontological principle of cinema processing the future. Secondly, film depends on the world as

ontologically *equiprimordial*³²⁰; thus Pasolini *claims reality to be like cinema in nature*, and Bazin speaks of the *myth of total cinema*.

Yet, with the shift into Heideggerian terminology, and the doubling of Dasein, I propose to think in terms of *double negation* when discussing film as world and world as film: Through the process of recording images a negative of the world is created, and the negation of this negative is its positive by reproduction. We have defined this negation of negation in film before, in relation to the reproduced real of reality in film: Film is real *by negating the presence* of what is real, which again is negated. It is referring to an absence which negates its absence, as it simultaneously evokes presence. Hegel applies a similar principle of the negation of negation to time *and* space, thus paving the way for Derrida's principle of the trace [*le trace*]: *a becoming-space of time and a becoming-time of space*.

I will argue here that the trace is exactly that characteristic of time which shapes film into reality and reality into film, an aspect we have not addressed yet. I therefore propose to regard the trace as the Deleuzian link between Dasein and world, and the link between Dasein and film, the *in of being-in of Being as time*. Filming is tracing and tracing is filming. Film grasps this constant processing, and in its reproduction, reintegrates this very process. As we will see, film captures and reproduces the *presence of the moment of the now*. *Being-in-the-world* is tracing, as is *being-in-film*.

To better understand this link, which conditions Dasein's Being as an actual reality, let me have a brief look at some aspects of Derrida's essay "Ousia and Grammé". Derrida reaffirms that Heidegger introduces presence in the context of being and evokes the presence in the reduced temporal sense (not in sense of the presence itself, which is temporally threefold, as we have

³²⁰ 'Equiprimordial' is an English adaptation of the attempt to translate Heidegger's created word "gleich-ursprünglich" used in *Being and Time*. It means that two entities are both, primordial and interdependent; we cannot think one without the other – like for example Dasein and world, time and space etc. Of course the equiprimordiality of world and film is conceptually conditioned by the rise of film. Yet as Bazin has suggested, cinema rather corresponds to a primordial idea than to a technical invention. Therefore I argue that the world may have been conceptually grasped as cinema *without knowing the term*.

seen): “Entities are grasped in their Being as ‘presence’; this means that they are understood with regard to a definite mode of time — the ‘Present’.”³²¹ In this context Derrida evokes Aristotle’s concept of negativity of time (picked up later by Hegel and then by Heidegger), which describes this *presence in the present* as non-existent: time is that which is not — it always has been or is yet to come. As Derrida points out, for Aristotle, the kernel of time, the moment of *the now*, is non-temporal, a limit. It simultaneously is a catalyst to transform the future into past.

According to Derrida, Hegel has applied the same principle of negativity to space. Furthermore, space *is* time for Hegel.³²² The starting point thus is the negativity of time, whereas *the now* is “its nonbeing [*Nichtsein*] in itself and becomes immediately something other than itself”³²³. Hegel sets the point (the smallest spatial entity) as a non-spatial reference in relation to which spatial extension functions as negation: “It negates itself by itself in its relation to itself, that is, to another point. The negation of negation, the spatial negation of the point is the line.”³²⁴ (And in continuation, the negation of the line is the plane).

As Derrida emphasizes, this *lifting* [*Aufhebung*] is for Hegel furthermore “the truth of the point”³²⁵, just as the *nonbeing* of the present moment, *the now*, is the essence of time, or “the *absolute this* of time (*das absolute Dieses der Zeit*)” or “the absolutely negatively simple”³²⁶. These smallest units of space and time, the point and *the now*, are always in process of negating themselves, becoming something other while “the truth of the other-Being is, however, negation of negation”³²⁷. According to Derrida, space is time, and

³²¹ Martin Heidegger, *op. cit.*, p. 47

³²² Furthermore, according to Derrida, Bergson’s ‘time is space’ would be “in accord with Hegel’s thesis that space is time, in spite of the very different reasons that they have given.” (Cf. Jacques Derrida, “Ousia and Grammè: Note on a Note from Being and Time”, in: *Margins of Philosophy*, p. 37)

³²³ G.W.F. Hegel, *Jenaer Systementwürfe II*, quoted in: Jacques Derrida, *ibid.*, p. 41

³²⁴ Jacques Derrida, *op. cit.*, p. 42

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 41/42

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 42

this equalization lies exactly in the *negation of negativity*, which already is time. It “relifts [*relève*] space”³²⁸, is the truth of space – thus it *spaces itself*.

The negation at work in space or as space, the spatial negation of space, time is the truth of space. To the extent that it *is*, that is, to the extent that it becomes and is produced, that it manifests itself in its essence, that it *spaces* itself, in itself relating to itself, that is, in negating itself, space is time. It retemporalizes itself, it relates itself to itself and mediates itself as time. Time is *spacing*. It is the relation of space to itself, its for-itself.³²⁹

Based on this Hegelian principle of posited negativity, time and space do not only have an equiprimordial relation, but are creating each other. *Therefore the Aristotelian principle of presence as simultaneous absence is to be considered as a principle of both time and space.* In the photographic image (and therefore in film) this principle passes through what André Bazin calls the “transference of reality from the thing to its reproductions”³³⁰, still stemming from the ancient Egyptian “mummy complex”³³¹, out of time and space. In photography, while we access presence, absence is also manifest through *the now* that was captured. Cinema overcomes the constant dying of *the now* mechanically, imitating the principle of life in projecting movement, thus raising continuity. Ultimately, we are facing the real of reality here again.

This question remains: How does the now catalyze the future into the past? Why the constant necessity of negating the negation, to make the fading presence a permanence? How can Dasein come to process constantly towards that which it projects? In an Aristotelian sense of negation, Heidegger claims that to live means to be “constantly dying”³³² and assumes in this sense the negation and its negation, its living inscription as

³²⁸ Ibid., p.43

³²⁹ Ibid., p. 42-43

³³⁰ André Bazin, “The Ontology of the Photographic Image”, in: *op.cit.*, p. 14

³³¹ Ibid., p. 14

³³² “In being towards its death, Dasein is dying factically and indeed constantly, as long as it has not yet come to its demise.” (Cf. Martin Heidegger, *op. cit.*, p. 303)

a *persistent* characteristic of Dasein:

The 'connectedness of life', in which Dasein somehow maintains itself constantly, is precisely what we have overlooked in our analysis of Being-a-whole. (...) [Dasein] is 'actual' only in the 'now', and hops, as it were, through the sequence of 'nows' of its own 'time'.³³³

This "connectedness of life" makes Dasein temporal and resides in time itself. Deleuze's broken-link reverses this sense; that is, he stresses an *unconnectedness of and from life*. Therefore, I propose to call Deleuze's unconnected world not film but *photography*, frozen in a state beyond time, without the 'connectedness of life' that film produces exactly by the succession of stills in motion.

But how is this *principle of life*, which persists as a secret of time and space, that which makes the real of reality real? How is it possible that the visitors in *Solaris* can stabilize out of practically nothing – out of neutrinos, which are reflected human energy? And exactly here, a last question remains persistently unresolved: *How* does *the now* catalyze the future into the past? How is the present suddenly past and how, as such, does it present connectedness, being threefold time? Why the constant necessity of negating the negation to make the actual present? How can Dasein come to process constantly towards that which it projects? And is this projection a solaristic principle?

We have raised a series of new questions to follow up. I would like to refer to Martin Hägglund who, although he addresses neither film nor photography, has inspired this reflection by his reassessment of Derrida's concept of the trace. Hägglund's work addresses exactly the *survival movement* of the trace. He defends an "arche-materiality" of time, which describes the trace as deriving logically from *succession* (of moments) and therefore has spatial inscription already implicated as its survival mechanism, and persistence as spatial temporization:

³³³ Ibid., p. 425

The notion of arche-materiality follows from the structure of the trace that we derive from the logical implications of succession. (...) For one moment to be succeeded by another, it cannot first be present in itself and then be affected by its own disappearance. (...) Every temporal moment therefore depends on the material support of spatial inscription, since the latter enables the past to be retained for the future. The material support of the trace, however, is itself temporal. Without temporization a trace could not persist across time and relate the past to the future. Accordingly, the persistence of the trace cannot be the persistence of something that is exempt from the negativity of time.”³³⁴

In the set of considerations exposed until now, life and film, reality and cinema have become interchangeable and both appear as the result of Dasein’s persistent tracing in being. Dasein as *being-in-film* makes this tracing graspable, but not yet intelligible: that which makes the actual real in the sense of its presence in the present, even if only in the moment *now*, even if in film through illusion kept in motion, must await further examination. Yet the actual real in presence is that which makes being’s temporality spatial, so we can ask the question from a slightly different perspective: Why does being trace at all and how can there be this constant succession and overcoming of negativity in the principle of life?

5. “Solaris” as Suicide-Machine

For now, we only can guess that the withdrawing principle of life, as well as the constant negativity of being, is linked to the domain of the real of reality – the presence of what is absent. The present moment confronts us constantly with our own death, and throws us permanently ahead, into the abyss of the

³³⁴ Martin Hägglund interviewed by Robert King, “Radical atheism and ‘the arche-materiality of time’”, in: *Journal of Philosophy: A Cross-Disciplinary Inquiry*, p. 63/64

still-outstanding. Anxiety is thereby our true mood towards this nothing, which we are constantly covering up to avoid remembering, although anxiety “provides the phenomenal basis for explicitly grasping Dasein’s primordial totality of Being.”³³⁵ In prefacing further parts of this analysis, I propose to ask for the negation of being in *Solaris*, which could be a hint as to the withdrawing principle of life and Dasein’s constant being thrown.

The question of worldhood and filmhood would find its equivalent in the next neologism “solarishood”: by grasping these principles new conclusions on filmhood and worldhood will emerge. Furthermore, the mood of anxiety is the mood present in the movie *Solaris* par excellence. It penetrates each scene and unfolds each time people are isolated; indeed they are much more anxious than they would ever be on earth.

The notion of death as a principle for closure, for completeness and meaning, and for escape from the abyss of nothing designs a real as nothing. In this nothing *being* is the most withdrawing secret. Death, together with and mirrored in the presence of absence and displacement, is the guiding principle of “*Solaris*” as a film and as a narrative: Harey is the resurrection of a dead person and she constantly tries to kill herself. The longing for death is thus an active leitmotif of the movie, nearly a natural consequence, a way out of anxiety and a way to come to being as a whole. About film as a longing for death I propose to reflect in the next chapter, having the following question in mind: is our constant motivation to risk to go on living in truth our longing to reach the end, the longing for suicide?

As I have mentioned, Heidegger describes something always still outstanding in our existence, “But to that which is thus outstanding ‘the end’ itself belongs. The ‘end’ of Being-in-the-world is death.”³³⁶ Death or the ‘end’ of *being-in-the-world* (which for Heidegger is linked to *Vollendung* – perfection)

³³⁵ Martin Heidegger, *op.cit.*, p. 227

³³⁶ Quote in German: “Zu diesem Ausstand aber gehört das Ende selbst. Das ‘Ende’ des In-der-Welt-seins ist der Tod.” (Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 234; translation mine – C.R.)

“limits and determines in every case whatever totality is possible for Dasein”³³⁷ and enables *being-a-whole* (being at an end).

In “Solaris” Harey’s main plan becomes an obsession to die, to accomplish *being-as-a-whole*. Her desire of an authentic Dasein, of being-towards-death, depends thereby on her individuation, her subjectivity, her being more than a reflected image of something other in time – to get objective existence she has to step out of time and to close her life, to commit suicide. The hope to succeed in dying, to eventually conclude life, transforms her identity. This voluntary liquidation of herself is a cinematographic act.

In the following chapter I will claim that the longing for death is a cinematographic principle anchored in Wagner’s *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the ‘total work of art’, which is regarded as the precursor of cinema, anticipating its main aesthetic principles, and fulfilling the solaristic longing for death.

³³⁷ “Dieses Ende, zum Seinkönnen, das heißt zur Existenz gehörig, begrenzt und bestimmt die jemögliche Ganzheit des Daseins.” (Cf. *ibid.*, p. 234; translation mine – C.R.)

XII.
THE MYTH OF TOTAL CINEMA
AND THE CINEMATIC SUICIDE OF WAGNER'S
GESAMTKUNSTWERK

1. Total Enchantment:
An Ontological Principle of Cinema

There are three associations that immediately come to our mind when we think of the musical work of Richard Wagner: first - the “*Gesamtkunstwerk*”, the *total work of art*, uniting all different forms of arts - visual arts, theater, dance, music, poetry; second - the redemption of the viewer through the form of the ‘music drama’, in which the protagonists are furthering the mythological narrative and revealing their motives and inner states; and third - a modern music ahead of its time, which affects our nervous system. These features ground an intense aesthetic experience originating *change* in the state of mind of the viewer. The dense audio-visual interplay of music and dramatic staging causes a mesmerizing effect, often referred as ‘overwhelming’ or as an ‘aesthetic attack’. This smashing impact induces the dissolution of the individual consciousness of the spectator. Peter Sloterdijk characterizes the same effect as “*Totalverzauberung*” (which I have opted to translate with ‘total

enchantment'), and establishes a bridge between the Wagnerian aesthetics and the cinema of violence:

"[There is] a generation of moviegoers who are after the 'total enchantment' and assume the unreality of the genre at the outset, but then wants actually to be 'flooded'. Especially in Germany there is a tradition of 'overwhelming art' (*Überwältigungskunst*), and this is an aesthetic habitus since Wagner; whereby it is also a part of culture, [one says], that the subject dissolves in the theatre by facing the portrayed violence, but also by facing the smashing power of music and image, and only recovers on the way home."³³⁸
(translation mine – C.R.)

I propose to comprehend this conversion of total enchantment in film and in Wagner's music drama from the viewpoint of film. More specifically, I suggest to conceptualize the term as an *ontological principle of cinema*: total enchantment is the bond that cinema establishes with the viewer, the *catalyst* of the *being-in* of *being-in-film* - this gives us a hint on the withdrawing principle with which the continuity of *being-in-the-world* originates: the link of being-in, the constituent of the "being-there" of Dasein. Cinema is apprehended as an involving art that substitutes the natural perception of the viewer by combining, just as the Wagnerian music drama, the visual and the audible. As we have previously seen, according to Bazin, cinema's genesis is pre-established in the human mind, in Plato's Cave and especially in the myth of total cinema.

³³⁸ "Es ist eine Generation von Kinogängern da, die mehr auf 'Totalverzauberung' setzt und die Irrealität des Genres von vornherein einräumt, und dann aber auch überschwemmt werden will. Gerade in Deutschland gibt es ja eine Tradition von solcher Überwältigungskunst, von Wagner her, einen ästhetischen Habitus; wo man sagt, das ist ja auch ein Teil der Kultur, daß sich das Subjekt im Zuschauerraum angesichts der dargestellten Gewalt, aber auch angesichts der überschwemmenden Kraft von Musik und Bild auflöst und erst auf dem Heimweg wieder sammelt." (Cf. Peter Sloterdijk, interviewed by Michael Althen, "Perlen des kollektiven Wahnsinns - Ein Gespräch mit Peter Sloterdijk über Kino und andere Bilder")

Furthermore, total enchantment assumed as an ontological principle presents affinity with Martin Heidegger's theory of death (despite Heidegger's disapproval of Wagner's works). The cinematic principle of total enchantment exists due to an overarching aesthetic experience and I will argue that it derives from an essential desire to continuously transcend our existential state, our *being-in-the-world*. This desire is equivalent to an epistemic search for cognition, for truth or for some manifestation of the real of reality; it longs for the disclosure of that which Heidegger calls "Sein als Ganzes" - the "being-as-a-whole", and that, only is (im)possible through death or its disclosure in anxiety, as we have seen. We have further observed how the term 'whole' relies on a conceptual presupposition of death as completion and conclusion.

The argumentative founding on Heidegger still raises the question of *how* the total enchantment affects us: what happens to *being-in-the-world* when it is facing total enchantment's impact?

Total enchantment is founded on a replacement of physical and natural experience by favoring an aesthetic experience that immerses the mind into a state comparable to that of hypnosis or dream, resembling reports of 'after-death experiences' or certain esoteric reports describing the existence of an 'astral body': the mind seems to leave the body, while it remains still and cramped for hours in a dark room – an authentic movie viewer as if chained in Plato's cave, which is somehow the ontological origin of cinema - even if the comparison fails, that cinema is an illusion of reality: the cinema spectator is actually the one who seeks the light outside the cave.³³⁹

³³⁹ "What Plato is giving us is a metaphor, not a literal account of the epistemic faculties needed to grasp the reality of Forms. (...) My suggestion, then, is that it is our experience of the empirical world *outside* the movie theater that is analogous to Plato's cave dwellers (as he himself supposed), and our experience *within* the movie theater is analogous to the escapee's experience *outside* the cave. That is, we gain a special insight into reality by watching movies that we don't obtain by means of our ordinary empirical experience. To put it in Platonic terms, we can gain access to Truth, Goodness, and Beauty by watching films—they give us a conduit to those "higher" realities." (Cf. Colin McGinn, "A Multimodal Theory of Film Experience", in: *Thinking Reality and Time through Film*, pp. 156-157)

Plato has developed a concept of knowledge, where the truth is difficult to grasp, allegorically compared to a world of illusionary projections, which replaces the world itself, and which resembles the situation in a movie theater. Yet in the allegory, the humans are trapped in the cave, "*here they have been from their childhood* and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move"³⁴⁰. They look forward to a wall, where they see shadows. The important thing to Plato is that they are not having any notion of their condition: "To them, the truth [reality] would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images."³⁴¹

To the usual reading of the allegory (you have to leave the cave to know the truth, even if it is difficult) I want to add the following idea: This projection of shadows is characterized by a higher degree of reality than the actual situation (chained and looking at a wall), and ties a link between man and world, creating a situation of total enchantment. What interests me in our context is the human susceptibility to be man-as-spectator: to fully enter a projected universe, whereby this entering corresponds to a search for transcendence. This human availability constitutes the *archi-possibility* of cinema inherent in the human condition.

Bazin takes this possibility of *total cinema* to lie at the origin of cinema, a response to an idealized need intuited in the human mind: "*The cinema is an idealistic phenomenon*. The concept men had of it existed so to speak fully armed in their minds, as if in some platonic heaven (...)"³⁴² That is, since we imagine worlds and philosophize, we envision a connection between perception and the will to overcome reality. We even favor a *reality more real than the world* - to Bazin "a myth, the myth total cinema"³⁴³. As we have mentioned previously, this myth pictures the utopia of a perfect, multidimensional re-creation of the world, which has not been yet realized, not even by cinema:³⁴⁴ "cinema has not yet been invented."³⁴⁵

³⁴⁰ Plato, translated by Benjamin Jowett, *The Allegory of the Cave*, p. 1

³⁴¹ Ibid., p. 2

³⁴² André Bazin, *op. cit.*, p. 17

³⁴³ Ibid., p. 22

³⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 21

In this perspective, the total enchantment becomes a manifestation of total cinema. Both act on us because we desire it, prefer it to the real world. In a primordial way, there is an impulse to escape from here to the afterlife, a desire for dissolution, a longing for death - '*Todesdrang*', a term, which arises during German Romanticism, simultaneously with the development of photography. In what follows we will seek to better understand this longing, focusing on its meaning in the work of Wagner, in film and also in Heidegger's thought: in the center of the inquiry into being lies anchored in Heidegger's theory of death again, projected as the possibility of impossibility, always yet to come. Are we, after all, going to the movies because we want to die, like CP Harey on the planet Solaris?

2. Death Wish and Total Enchantment

As we have seen, total cinema and the ontological principle of total enchantment rely on the viewer's ability to completely enter a projection, a work or a medium. This entry is motivated by the need for uniting with the world, an answer to our desire for an experience in which inner and outer being do not oppose. It also corresponds to a search for truth or for knowledge, absolute in its tendency to create a relationship with the world from object to object or from subject to subject, substituting the subject-object dualism. Such a meeting is only possible as an aesthetic or ontological experience and not an empirical one, because it would imply a dissolution of the subject. The musical drama of Wagner reacts to this yearning for such an absolute aesthetic experience, so overwhelming that it kills: by dissolving the individual consciousness of the viewer within the work of art.

The *Festspielhaus* of Bayreuth is the theater designed for Wagner on purpose to provide this experience of collective suicide, a kind of prototype of

³⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 21

the later cinema theatre: the audience is seated on an inclined plane, the room completely darkened during the performance, thus the audience disappears. The viewer's mind is receiving the projection of the stage directly, entering it, escaping the surrounding dark. In hiding the orchestra in the so-called "mystic abyss" (*mystischer Abgrund*), the composer anticipates sound cinema whereas the audio dimension joins directly the visual dimension (the *mise-en-scène*), there is no intermediary visible. This interplay intensifies the overwhelming power of the aesthetic experience. We are facing the death of the spectator, who becomes the virtual or ghostly inhabitant of a musical and scenic work, which later finds its perfection in cinema. Susan Sontag states:

What Wagner wanted was an ideal theatre, a theatre of maximal emotions purged of distractions and irrelevancies. Thus Wagner chose to conceal the orchestra of Bayreuth Festspielhaus under a black wooden shell, and once quipped that, having invented the invisible orchestra, he wished he could invent the invisible stage. (...) And Wagner's fantasy of the invisible stage was fulfilled more literally in that immaterial stage, cinema.³⁴⁶

By suggesting an "invisible stage" Wagner becomes an unwitting carrier of the myth of total cinema, the *not-yet* of cinema, which Bazin mentions. The implied will of dissolution, of full union with the work, emerges during the romantic era of which Richard Wagner is a late representative, even if prematurely modern. Romanticism aims to transcend the limits of reality in favor of a '*becoming poetry*' of life itself: to dissolve the physical reality in order to access another, higher one; to achieve a union between man and nature and to project a fusion of reality and dream, in which death would be the cancellation of all limits. Consequently there emerges in the romantic era the '*Todessehnsucht*' – the longing or yearning for death, and the '*Todesdrang*' - the urge for death. In both the individual feels a strong attraction to death, caused by poetic impulses. One really desires to die, longs to dissolve reality and oneself, to encounter death: the romantic "endless

³⁴⁶ Susan Sontag, "Syberberg's Hitler", in: *Under the Sign of Saturn*, p. 157

sleep", a "homecoming" as formulated by Novalis³⁴⁷. This impulsive, yearning attraction to death is the key to understand the powerful impact of total enchantment.

Paradoxically, the preserved moment of death appears in art as a resistance against time. André Bazin associates art, from its inception, from Egyptian mummies, to the psychological need of man to oppose death. The embalming of the Pharaohs allows them apparently to resist and to survive time, and can be considered the origin of painting and sculpture, or the first photographs. According to Bazin, this association between time and human condition – the psychological desire to prolong life, to overcome death, to achieve, at least in appearance, immortality – generates art.³⁴⁸

I have previously mentioned how Roland Barthes develops in his theory of photography the concept of death of the photographed subject-object, when he tries to assimilate the essence, or that which he calls the *noema*, of photography. According to Barthes, the photograph anticipates and saves the instant of a premature death: The picture turns the photographed subject into an object. The subject feels this transformation as its own "I then experience a micro-version of death [...]: I am truly becoming a specter"³⁴⁹ or "I have become Total-Image, which is to say, Death in person."³⁵⁰

The photographed object is the referent, but by emanating a kind of specter, it acquires the nature of a simulacrum. According to Barthes the expression "spectrum of the photograph" is related to the word spectacle and adds the return of the dead to photography:

³⁴⁷ "Praised be eternal night for us - and praised eternal slumber. (...) Foreignness has lost attraction, we long for our Father's home." (translation mine – C.R.) - "Gelobt sei uns die ew'ge Nacht, - Gelobt der ew'ge Schlummer. (...) - Die Lust der Fremde ging uns aus, - Zum Vater wollen wir nach Haus." (Novalis (Friedrich Freiherr von Hardenberg), "Sehnsucht nach dem Tode", in: *NOVALIS Hymnen an die Nacht – Kommentierte Studienausgabe*, p. 16

³⁴⁸ André Bazin, *op. cit.*, p. 13

³⁴⁹ Roland Barthes, *op. cit.*, p. 14

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14

And the person or thing photographed is the target, the referent, a kind of little simulacrum, an eidolon emitted by the object, which I should like to call the Spectrum of the photograph, because this word retains, through its root, a relation to “spectacle”, and adds to it that rather terrible thing, which is there in every photograph: the return of the dead.³⁵¹

Barthes refers here to the transformation of an object into an image, calling it a ghost, since the word “specter” comes from “spectrum” in Latin, which means “image” or “apparition”. By still adding the word “spectacle”, which has together with “spectrum” its origin in the Latin verb “specere” – “to see” Barthes conceptually describes a show of specters, as “spectacle” in French designates “show”. What is a specter? It is a ghost, also defined as an “apparition of a dead person that is believed to appear or to become manifest to the living, typically as a nebulous image”³⁵².

The contact with image as death in the form of specters is a very principle of cinema. The anticipation of death in photography, when applied to cinema, happens 24 times per second, a serial phantasmagoria, which is set in motion. This movement, in cinema, is the transcendence of death itself, accomplished through constant dying, just as being constantly dies. The spectral aspect of photographic reproduction is further evoked by the visitors in “Solaris”: they are specters, which somehow have entered matter: an embodiment coming from memory. The very fact that some of these specters still have living models on Earth, like the giant boy that Berton had seen decades before Kelvin’s arrival on Solaris, means that an anticipation of death has taken place.

This ongoing materialization on Solaris concerns any character in any movie: we can call it materialization, reification or reincarnation. It corresponds to a transformation from an imaginary into an immaterial and projected reality. Movie characters are brought to life, mortality is denied to them and infinity is their destiny. At the same time they embody death: If the movie is playing, the character’s actor is often already dead, and the filmed

³⁵¹ Ibid., p. 9

³⁵² Definition found in: *Oxford Dictionoraries*, available online

reality no longer exists, but its replica does. This feature fits the CP Harey in "Solaris"; later in the film entire pieces of memory materialize, like the earthlike island where we find Kelvin in the closing part of the movie, with his father: Solaris becomes total cinema for its own characters, a metacinema.

Cinema conveys a spectral logic in eidetic and kinetic form, the presence of the absent as returning dead ones. The longing for death finds satisfaction in the encounter with that which has already died. Jean-Louis Leutrat describes this achievement as the revival of that which has already died. This experience, even if immaterial, recovers in image and time a reality, which already has passed. The viewer, who was dissolved with the closing lights in the cinema theatre, meets other dead ones: a party of ghosts.

The return is a great cinematographic theme, the eternal return ... Bring back to life, give a second chance to live, to reinfuse usable, dead material with life, and to set in motion the living-dead, the zombies, the mummies.³⁵³
(translation mine – C.R.)

This meeting with the mummies corresponds to, in the musical dramas of Wagner, the immersion of the viewer into the staged, into the represented scenes with the characters. Hereby the theatre room turns into a suggestive automatographer³⁵⁴ of dreams: *the not-yet-cinema*.

Consequently, the relationship between the spectator and the filmic universe is shaped by "gravity of death" – we have considered many aspects, namely, the principle of total enchantment, the suicide machine, the doubling of Dasein, the desire for death and dissolution, unification with the world, the longing for knowledge and truth. Film has a death-driven, post-mortem character and is already literally past reality. The viewer thus faces death, as if

³⁵³ The original quote in French: "Le retour est un grand thème cinématographique, l'éternel retour... Ramener à la vie, donner une seconde chance de vivre, réinsufler la vie à un matériel usable, mort, mettre en mouvement les morts-vivants, les zombies, les momies." (Cf. Jean-Louis Leutrat, *op. cit.*,, p. 41)

³⁵⁴ 'Automatographer' is composed of the Greek words *automaton* (from *autos* - "self" and *matos* "thinking, animated, willing,") and *graphein* ("to write").

a change of perspective would happen - as projection of a spectral apparition, a ghostlike image, which has survived being. In film we actually glide through a disembodied world we cannot touch, a matterless reflection of the world made of light and shadow. The reality, objects and beings in movies, have a transcendental character. Just as any after-death universe, film constitutes a parallel world that is based on its own time and space.

3. The *Not-Yet-Cinema*: Projection, Death and Conclusion

This desire to meet death in cinema (or to meet that which has already passed or them who have already died – enabled and produced by the total enchantment), stems from our ontological desire to die, which meets our own biological as well as ontological condition: we are constantly dying, a thought Heidegger stresses. The desire for death also exists epistemologically, just as Heidegger indirectly assumes in *Being and Time*: to obtain the knowledge of the world as a whole, achieve all the knowledge about the real of being, is only possible when we die. Being as a whole will always elude us because it only becomes complete in death. The romantic longing for death thus becomes a desire for knowledge, an access to that whole or actual real, and with it our desire of cinema: we go to the movies because we want to die, but wanting to die means wanting to know, desiring the real image.

Death conditions the temporality of being, yet Dasein raises the question of its being from this temporal point of view. As we have seen, ontologically we cannot understand our real existence, our being as a whole, because Dasein is mortal: "When Dasein reaches its wholeness in death, it

loses simultaneously the 'being' of its 'there'.³⁵⁵ For Heidegger death is that which transforms the being of Dasein into a closed entity: Dasein becomes complete, as death is its closure. *Being-in-the-world* becomes a *being-towards-death*, which is always a *being-not-yet*. Dasein is thus open in its condition of permanent incompleteness.

This openness of Dasein itself lies in its 'being-towards' its own possibilities. Dasein "as long as it is', right to its end, it comports itself towards its potentiality-for-Being [*Seinskönnen*]." ³⁵⁶ The openness makes Dasein always "ahead-of-itself" [*Sichvorweg*]³⁵⁷, as an item in the structure of care. In Dasein there is always something *still outstanding*. I will now go still one step further than in the previous chapter in applying this unsettledness to film and to cinema, remaining in the context of Wagner's total work of art and total enchantment.

Regarding what has been said, death becomes the vehicle of the constant *not-yet* of cinema, which reveals its ontological status as a *not-yet-cinema* – a projection, the realization of which costs us our lives. In cinema we are constantly dying and being resurrected, just as the visitors in "Solaris", as we learn with Harey: she revives after suicide attempts several times. Her nature is immortality, but her true desire is death.

³⁵⁵ "But if it gains such 'wholeness', this gain becomes the utter loss of Being-in-the-World." (Cf. Martin Heidegger, *op. cit.*, p. 280). The translators have chosen a description here, because Heidegger, literally translated, states that "If Dasein reaches this wholeness it simultaneously loses the being of its there." (translation mine – C.R.)

³⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 279

³⁵⁷ 'Sichvorweg' is a proper term of Heidegger, composed by the words 'vorweg' – anticipating or ahead, and 'sich' - the reflexive form of yourself; but 'vorweg', as well, is composed of 'vor' – before or in front of, and 'weg' - absent, be it a person, a lost object or someone who died. In a further reading, the German noun 'der Weg' would add the meaning of 'pre-path'- 'Vor-Weg' a path, which we can predict or which still lies ahead, or even of being towards a path. Considering all these interpretations we should translate literally the Heideggerian term by 'ahead-of-yourself' or 'being-on-the-way-in-front-of yourself', though those do not immediately include the missing mortal sense of the term that Heidegger sets for use in this context: "even when it still exists but has nothing more 'before-it' and has 'settled [abgeschlossen] its account', its Being is still determined by 'the-ahead-of -itself'." (Cf. Ibid., p. 279)

In order to be "ahead-of-itself" Dasein projects itself (*entwirft sich auf*)³⁵⁸ in possibilities, a condition in which Dasein is thrown (*geworfen*) into Being³⁵⁹. "Solaris" as well as cinema in general is a carrier of this condition, which is implicit to its existential nature: death-drivenness. Dasein also projects itself into the (im)possibility of death as being inevitably thrown into it³⁶⁰ and offers the potentiality of Dasein as *being-towards-death*. This being-towards-death is "the possibility of authentic existence"³⁶¹, the possibility of Dasein to understand itself, because "anticipation becomes the possibility of an understanding of ones ownmost (*eigensten*) potentiality-of-Being"³⁶².

From there derives a continuing need for Dasein to close or conclude this "permanently-unsolved" of being to understand itself as "being-as-a-whole" (*Seiendes im Ganzen*). This will to understand causes in Dasein an existential desire for death, an anticipation of the realization of that which is still pending: as if it could make us connect with ourselves and with the world,

³⁵⁸ Heidegger uses in his own way the terms 'entwirft sich auf' and 'Entwurf' which is commonly translated 'projecting yourself' and 'projection', containing the nature of projection, of project, as well as of draft: something is drafted and thrown/ projected as a possibility by a projector (which is Dasein). As I mention in other texts of mine, this projection principle is of cinematic nature and processes time itself for the future, and film for the screen: both are thrown in the sense of the Heideggerian 'Geworfenheit' – frequently translated as thrownness. To-be-thrown (in Heidegger the one of Dasein into Being) is of the same family, deriving from throw - 'Wurf'. Hence, film, being itself is being processed - is a principle that is based on throwing.

³⁵⁹ "But thrownness, as a kind of Being, belongs to an entity which in each case is its possibilities, and is them in such a way that it understands itself in these possibilities and in terms of them, projecting itself upon them." (Martin Heidegger, *op. cit.*, p. 225) - "Die Geworfenheit aber ist die Seinsart eines Seienden, das je seine Möglichkeiten selbst ist, so zwar, daß es sich in und aus ihnen versteht (auf sie sich entwirft)." (Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 181)

³⁶⁰ "On the contrary, if Dasein exists, it has already been thrown into this possibility." (Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 295)

³⁶¹ My translation of: "Möglichkeit eigentlicher Existenz" (Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 263)

³⁶² My translation of: "Das Vorlaufen erweist sich als Möglichkeit des Verstehens des eigensten Seinkönnens" (Cf. *ibid.*, p. 263)

create an object-object relationship or a subject-subject one. As we have seen, in cinema this relationship happens to be actual: death becomes a possibility from which we simultaneously resurrect, as Dasein has doubled. Death implies in cinema its own transcendence, constantly, a double negation of Hegelian character: it is precisely our finitude, which makes us look for transcendence of any kind and at any instant– our ticket to the future; the principle of life. As Slavoj Žižek points out, this assertion of finitude is to be found in Heidegger's thought:

(...) [The] assertion of finitude as the unsurpassable predicament of being-human: it is our radical finitude, which exposes us to the opening of the future, to the horizon of what is to come, for transcendence and finitude are two sides of the same coin.³⁶³

This future is, for the present, the projection of the possibilities yet to come, of this still-unsolved, which death solves. The not-yet-cinema constitutes this human condition and leads to a temporality in which total cinema is always the future, which returns from death; and conversely, the future is this cinema, the full realization of the projected possibility. This openness for the future corresponds to our constant motivation to risk to go on living as well as the longing for reaching a conclusion. Therefore projection and conclusion present themselves as equiprimordial principles.

The discussions of the scientists in "Solaris" around the question whether Harey is to be called a human being or not mirrors this duplicity: we only have a human future if we die. Harey's non-human body - consisting of neutrinos instead of atoms – contradicts her identity becoming more and more human. Death is literally her only way out; only through death she can humanize herself and let her existence become a whole; she uses death as the possibility to come to the "very being" of her Dasein³⁶⁴. Her suicide also

³⁶³ Slavoj Žižek, *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism*, p. 866

³⁶⁴"Death is Dasein's ownmost possibility. Being towards this possibility discloses to Dasein its ownmost potentiality-for-Being, in which its very Being is the issue." (Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 307)

stands for the doubled Dasein of any spectator who wishes to die and dies through film. The very meaning of life is here in stake – as a narrative as well as an ontological principle.

4. Closure, Myth and Cinema: Death and the Total Work of Art

As we have seen, the aforementioned concept of death as closure alludes to the Hegelian claim “everything reasonable is a closure” whereas “closure” acquires the sense of “conclusion”. I propose to delve into this context in more detail: The duplicity of the German “Schluss” is picked up by Byung-Chul Han. As Han adds, Hegel can be grasped in a *narrative sense*.

For Hegel, 'Schluss' is not a formal logical category. A 'Schluss' arises when the beginning and end of a process form a meaningful context, a union with sense, as they intertwine. Thus, the narrative is a 'Schluss' - [here: a conclusion]. Due to its 'Schluss' - [here: a completion] it produces a meaning.³⁶⁵ (translation mine – C.R.)

Han's observation philosophically shifts the narrative character of cinema and the music dramas of Wagner, transforming them into special agents of reason: both imply double closure – as ending and as death. Let me, in this context, once more recall Pasolini's words emphasizing the special bond between death and cinema:

³⁶⁵ “Für Hegel ist der Schluss keine formallogische Kategorie. Ein Schluss ergibt sich, Inn der Anfang und das Ende eines Prozesses einen sinnvollen Zusammenhang, eine sinnvolle Einheit bilden, Inn sie ineinandergreifen. So ist die Narration ein Schluss. Aufgrund ihres Schlusses bringt sie einen Sinn hervor.” (Cf. Byung-Chul Han, “Bitte Augen schließen”, in: *Philosophie_Magazin, February/ March*, Berlin, 2013, p. 60)

Death does determine life, I feel that, and I've written it, too, in one of my recent essays, where I compare death to film-montage. Once life is finished, it acquires a sense; up to that point it has not got a sense; its sense is suspended and therefore ambiguous... For me, death is the maximum of epicness and myth.³⁶⁶

Death thus becomes a narrative principle of finitude and closure reflecting the Hegelian idea of 'Schluss' as ending or closure, also as a principle of creation of meaning. Death creates myth and narration, and makes conclusion and meaning possible. Every movie implies its own death. At the end, the spectator attends to this determining conclusion: 'Vollendung' in German, deriving from 'Ende' (end) in German, but designating the completion as much as the perfection or fulfillment. A film dies and revives permanently due to its inherent constant possibility of projection. Film necessarily involves death along with its negation. The assumption "When Dasein reaches its wholeness in death, it simultaneously loses the Being of its 'there'"³⁶⁷ has been overcome by cinema as every movie reaches wholeness.

The Being of Dasein appears in the world as something infinite and open to be closed in death. Its constant projection of death as the always still outstanding reflects the assertion of final achievement. From the same etymological family of 'Schluss' in German are the Heideggerian terms 'Abgeschlossenheit' - the state of being settled of something that was pending - and 'Erschlossenheit' - something whose meaning has been revealed. Cinema implicates this narrative principle of death, where I operate with something closed (geschlossen), solved (abgeschlossen) and disclosed (erschlossen), something which already is dead – in the sense of past and completed.

³⁶⁶ Pier Paolo Pasolini, *op.cit.*, p. 55-56

³⁶⁷ Martin Heidegger, *op.cit.*, p. 281; the original quote in German: "Das Erreichen der Gänze des Daseins im Tode ist zugleich Verlust des Seins des Da." (Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 237)

To dissolve this apparent contradiction, I suggest the following idea: as we have seen, while watching a movie, Dasein in fact doubles. In cinema *being-in-the-world* is substituted by *being-in-film*; worldhood becomes filmhood, only Dasein's being remains the same: "*The 'essence' of this entity [Dasein] lies in its existence*"³⁶⁸, although as *being-in* because of its conditional *being-there*. In the duplication of Dasein in cinema lies the ground for the disclosure of the ontological principle of total enchantment. As soon as the cinematic Dasein, which is in the film, dies (at the end of the film), the other Dasein – the one which had previously been dissolved when the lights in the showroom were powered down - resurrects. Dasein's double had access to a whole, lived an experience of death, and Dasein returns to the showroom. The presence-absence principle becomes a switching game. We are able to switch realities because of total enchantment.

Yet, as long as we are mortal, we will search for meaning and for narrative. I propose to delve further into this correlation of narration and death in film: Richard Wagner himself outlines a link between death and narration (on stage), in which the "artistic representation" needs distance from life – this distance is death. Death becomes then an artistic condition for the vision of *everything* as a *whole*, similar to Heidegger:

Only such action can be suitable for artistic representation, as has already come to its conclusion in life, about the pure fact of which there is no doubt present, (...). Only as to that which has come to its closure in life are we capable to grasp the necessity of its appearance, to understand the context of its individual moments: an action is only first completed if the person committing the act, (...) is no longer subjected to involuntary assumptions about his possible action as well, (...) only with one's death, one is exempt from that subjection, for I now know everything that he did and that he was.³⁶⁹
(translation mine – C.R.)

³⁶⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 67

³⁶⁹ "Zur künstlerischen Darstellung geeignet kann nur eine solche Handlung sein, die im Leben bereits zum Abschluß gekommen ist, über die als reine Tatsache kein Zweifel mehr vorhanden ist, (...). Erst an dem im Leben Vollendeten vermögen wir die Notwendigkeit seiner

Wagner further states that death is the ideal object of cathartic exploration on stage. Thus, form and content complement and automate in the total work of art in a cinematic way:

"Yet I secure the recognized [das Erkannte] most perfectly in the conscious representation of that death itself, and this in order to explain it [death] to ourselves through the representation of that action, of which the necessary conclusion has been death itself."³⁷⁰ (translation mine – C.R.)

Cinema has created its own continuation of Wagner's total artwork. Its pre-cinematographic features are on a concrete level the total enchantment and on an abstract one a foreshadowing imaginary projection of a real; both are perfected in cinema as the same visionary dream. In the film "Solaris" we have the impression of being indeed inside a total artwork, a total cinema, a complete substitution of reality by a projected one: the space station near the planet Solaris is somehow the recreated prolongation of Earth. Death is explored on all possible levels here: as a film, as a reality on a space station, as the mise-en-scène of life and resurrection of the main characters and their representers, since long gone by, yet eternalized in the myth of their representations. There is the possibility that Kris dies on Earth and that the whole Solaris scenario is an afterlife mental state to conclude that love is the only thing that matters, which is one of Tarkovsky's tasks as a director: "to stimulate reflection on what is essentially human and eternal in each

Erscheinung zu fassen, den Zusammenhang seiner einzelnen Momente zu begreifen: eine Handlung ist aber erst vollendet, Wenn der Mensch, von dem diese Handlung vollbracht wurde, (...) unwillkürliche Annahmen über sein mögliches Tun ebenfalls nicht mehr unterworfen ist; (...) erst mit seinem Tod ist er von dieser Unterworfenheit befreit, denn wir wissen nun alles, was er tat und was er war." (Cf. Richard Wagner, "Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft", in: *Dichtungen und Schriften*, p. 218-219)

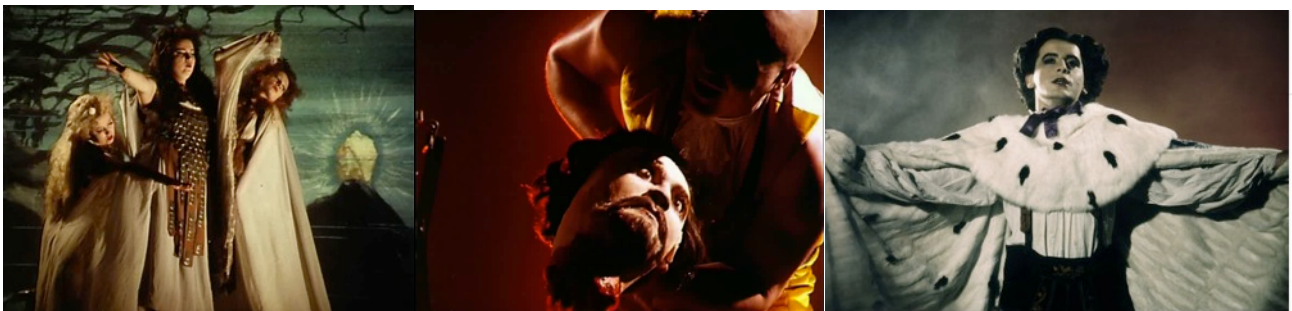
³⁷⁰ "Am vollkommensten versichern wir uns des Erkannten aber in der bewußtvollen Darstellung jenes Todes selbst, und, um ihn uns zu erklären, durch die Darstellung derjenigen Handlung, deren notwendiger Abschluß jener Tod war." (Cf. *ibid.*, p. 220)

individual soul”³⁷¹. The reflection on love is thereby a central concern, which for Tarkovsky is valid for all his films.

In the end everything can be reduced to the one simple element which is all a person can count upon in his existence: the capacity to love. That element can grow within the soul to become the supreme factor which determines the meaning of a person's life. My function is to make whoever sees my films aware of his need to love and to give his love.³⁷²

In that sense the dimension of love gives a kind of essence of human need and capacity, which he carries on into other worlds, or into afterlife.

To step for some moments off “Solaris”: the filmic work of Hans - Jürgen Syberberg³⁷³ is another aesthetically strong example where we can contemplate an application and somehow an improvement of the Wagnerian theories introduced so far. Syberberg engages in a special relationship with death, expressed in his portrayal of characters who have died and others, who have been granted a mythic dimension.



Stills of the film “Ludwig – Requiem für einen Jungfräulichen König” by Hans-Jürgen Syberberg

³⁷¹ Andrei Tarkovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 200

³⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 200

³⁷³ Susan Sontag calls Syberberg the perfect follower of Wagner as a filmmaker: “Syberberg takes very literally, more literally than Eisenstein ever did, the promise of film as a synthesis of the plastic arts, music, literature, and theater—the modern fulfillment of Wagner's idea of the total work of art. (It has often been said that Wagner, had he lived in the twentieth century, would have been a filmmaker).“ (Cf., Susan Sontag, *op. cit.*, p. 156-157)

The intent of his aesthetic cinema project conveys an inherent conceptual *weight of death* (Todeslastigkeit). There is an interconnectedness of all that is perceivable in a movie, a claim for a totality overwhelming in its opulence and detailed combination of all elements. This concept involves the development of a total work of art, in the sense of the implicit longing for death and underlying total enchantment, which is heading for a total cinema, for the not-yet-cinema. But we also face a perfection in the stage performance presuming to continue life itself without resorting to mimesis. Syberberg is stating that "Cinema is the continuation of life by other means and not the mere mirror of life" and thus assumes a symbolist position³⁷⁴.

As Susan Sontag points out, symbolism is an artistic current, which achieves the invisible Wagnerian stage as "an invisible theater of the mind". Syberberg "construes cinema as a kind of ideal mental activity, being both sensuous and reflective, which takes up where reality leaves off."³⁷⁵ The film "Ludwig - Requiem für einen Jungfräulichen König" is a self-reflective example of film's death-driven nature, especially because it was conceived as a cinematic requiem. We are facing a filmic manifesto declaring war on forms and dominant traditions (Hollywood), an death wish orgy, a party of ghosts and total enchantment, a combination and interconnection of all possible elements, the smallest to the grandest, forming a work, which is both a language, a dance, a stage, a dream and a body, a movie that retrieves the aura of myth, and crushing the entire interplay:

This 'Requiem' should be described as: (...) a monologic language in blocks, individual or like text scores, in chorus. Calm, long shots, epic clarity, alienations, pathos and irony, the character of dream and vision besides clarity and schema, a relational and structural technique without randomness in prop, clothes, music, sounds, etc. (...) Chapters create paragraphs and chronology, chains of associations are keeping the adjacent blocks of the acoustic and optical strictly together, nothing should stand alone, (...)

³⁷⁴ "Der Film ist die Fortsetzung des Lebens mit anderen Mitteln und nicht der Spiegel des Lebens." (Cf. Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, "Film als Musik der Zukunft", in: *op. cit.*, p. 12)

³⁷⁵ Susan Sontag, *op. cit.*, p. 158

everything emits signals which vary in repetitions and thus turn into a *leitmotif*; they can characterize characters, situations, theme or plot.³⁷⁶
(translation mine – C.R.)

With this type of film, as Syberberg's "Requiem", a total work of art in form of cinema has been realized, a world of projected shadows, which occupy the mind and replace the perception of reality, but which also are expressions of a desire for the knowledge of that world whose real escapes us. The film's tendency is the myth of total cinema. But this cinema of Bazanian myth, by nature, is always a not-yet-cinema. This not-yet contains a totality, its permanent projection of death. This projection corresponds to a human need for transcendence and to the utopian desire for a full re-creation of the world, more a potential than an accomplishment, a limit towards which the utopian desire of a more completed and concluded world. However, this cinema is more graspable than reality, a vector towards the possibility of exceeding finitude, a projection of the impossibility of Dasein. This impossibility, in its dynamism and its precedent condition, permits a distancing of life but also a resurrection, a dead without dying, dying in order to know, opening the possibilities of the not-yet to come: a cinematic philosophy of the future.

³⁷⁶ "Dieses 'Requiem' sollte heißen: (...) eine monologische Sprache, in Blöcken, einzeln oder wie im Chor, Textpartituren. Ruhe, lange Einstellungen, epische Deutlichkeit, Verfremdungen, Pathos und Ironie, Traum- und Visionscharakter neben Klarheit und Übersicht, eine Beziehungs- und Gefügetechnik ohne Zufall in Requisit, Kleidung, Musik, Geräuschen usw. (...) Kapitel schaffen Absätze und Chronologie, Assoziationsketten halten das nebeneinander der Blöcke akustisch und optisch streng zusammen, nichts darf allein stehen, (...) alles sendet Signale aus, die in, die in Wiederholungen variiert zu Leitmotiven werden und Personen, Situationen, Thema oder Handlung charakterisieren können." (Cf. Jürgen Syberberg, *op.cit.*, pp. 11-12)

XIII.

THE SOLARISTIC APPARATUS

The ultra-fast computers of the future will be based on beams of light that exploit the strange properties of the sub-atomic or quantum mechanical world. Using light and quantum mechanics offers the prospect of computers trillions of times more powerful than we have today.³⁷⁷

Throughout this chapter my arguments will serve to conceptually set the planet Solaris as a techno-organic apparatus and thereby base on Benjamin's cine-apparatus as well as Karen Barad's intra-actively entangled apparatus, which she develops from Foucault's "dispositif". It is thereby my aim to transpose Barad's theory into the context of film and to the solaristic system. In respect to Benjamin, I aim to deepen his conception of cine-apparatus by a brief look on his idea of technology. Bringing both theoretical approaches together I will develop the idea of Solaris as an organic, biomimetic machine, tending towards total cinema: solely an organic machine, in which technology has become as sophisticated and as intra-actively entangled as nature, can fulfill the conditions to recreate reality in its integrity. Solaris therefore forms a new kind of apparatus, the brain-apparatus, which is

³⁷⁷ David Whitehouse, "Q&A: Teleportation", in: *BBC News*, June 14, 2004, quoted by: Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, p. 384

techno-organic, a bio-mimetic cinema-apparatus of cosmic origin. Within the solaristic system Solaris itself is a conceptual persona, coining the principle of an *intra-active entanglement of film and reality by diffraction* instead of *reflection*: not only is film an organic part of reality, but film is worldmaking and changes reality and equally is Solaris. A diffractive approach seems in fact adequate to grasp the solaristic kind of reasoning. As Barad says:

Haraway notes that " [reflexivity or reflection] invites the illusion of essential, fixed position, while [diffraction] trains us to more subtle vision" (1992). Diffraction entails "the processing of small but consequential differences," and "the processing of differences . . . is about ways of life" (ibid.). (...) I further develop and elaborate these ideas (...). Ultimately, I argue that a diffractive methodology is respectful of the entanglement of ideas and other materials in ways that reflexive methodologies are not.³⁷⁸

However before delving into Barad's diffractive approach and its application in our context, let me briefly refer an earlier attempt to transpose Barad's quantum ontology into the context of cinema. Patricia Pisters, in her essay "Temporal Explorations in Cosmic Consciousness: Intra-Agential Entanglements and the Neuro-Image" tries to analyze her proposal of the neuro-image based on Deleuze's thought³⁷⁹, in the light of Barad's position. However, Pisters does not attribute a special cinematographic relevance to the concept of apparatus. Rather her proposal implies a transposition of Barad's thought into the area of film in a strictly Deleuzian sense: „Both Barad and Deleuze have argued against representationalism and have proposed a more complex understanding of the connections between the world, science

³⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 29

³⁷⁹ Pisters summarizes the idea of the neuro-image based on Deleuze as follows: "Following from Gilles Deleuze's distinction between classical film as movement-images and modern postwar film as time-images, I propose calling contemporary cinema of the digital age 'neuro-images'." (Cf. Patricia Pisters, "Temporal Explorations in Cosmic Consciousness: Intra-Agential Entanglements and the Neuro-Image", in: *Cultural Studies Review Volume 21, Number 2*, September 2015, p. 120)

and philosophy.“³⁸⁰ Furthermore, according to Deleuze “in the classical cinema of the movement-image relations between body, brain, world and screen are organic.”³⁸¹ By transposing then Barad’s method to the Deleuzian topology of cinema „we can see that Deleuze’s conception of images is fundamentally intra-agential in this new materialist sense“³⁸², Pisters argues. We have seen how much Deleuze’s concepts of cinema and different type of images are inspired by Bergson’s thought where image = matter. In what follows I propose to recall Bergson’s concept of the universe as an aggregate of images, to integrate Barad’s thought into our scope of analysis.

1. On the Entanglement of Mind and Matter

As we have mentioned, the rejection of correlationism is the lowest common denominator, which unites the different positions within speculative realism, including new forms of materialism, wherein Barad’s theories are appreciated. We have further suggested that Bergson can also be considered a *premature pioneer of speculative realism* as he withdraws from correlationism by refusing the dualism idealism-materialism and by trying to integrate subjectivity (perception) in his approach of reality.

Let me recall: For Bergson the world is image and thereby he defines matter as an aggregate of images³⁸³. He further argues that the perception of

³⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 121

³⁸¹ Ibid., P. 122

³⁸² Ibid., p. 125

³⁸³ “I call matter the aggregate of images and perception of matter these same images referred to the eventual action of one particular image, my body.” (Cf. Henri Bergson, *op.cit.*, p. 7)

matter and the image of matter coincide in the sense that “it is really in P, and not elsewhere, that the image of P is formed and perceived.”³⁸⁴ Yet this image differs from perception: “It is true that an image may be without being perceived”, says Bergson, “it may be present without being represented”³⁸⁵. Therefore, for Bergson, presence and representation of an image are two different things, just as matter and perception are.

This means, and here Bergson holds a position different from the classical materialists as well as from the idealists³⁸⁶ and the dualists, *that matter (and its movements) is not isolated from the rest of the world, and neither is perception*. There are movements of the material world and movements of perception, and they interact³⁸⁷. On the one hand, there is a *mind-independent reality* for Bergson, yet on the other hand, perception is part of the very same reality. Both are part of the same whole, the universe of images, in which a distinction between images of the mind and those exterior to it does not make sense: “[O]f the aggregate of images we cannot say that it is within us or without us, since interiority and exteriority are only relations among images.”³⁸⁸

Therefore, in Bergson’s theory mind and material world, subjectivity and reality are entangled and not to be separated. Such a position is solaristic (and therefore cinematographic) and describes aptly that which I propose to call *flowing reality*, reminiscent of the surface of the planet Solaris, covered by a fluid substance which is moving and thereby changing reality. This model can also be called an “intra-actively entangled model of reality” and I will argue throughout this chapter that Bergson’s theory can be correlated with Barad’s

³⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 38

³⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 27

³⁸⁶ “My consciousness of matter is then no longer either subjective, as it is for English idealism, or relative, as it is for the Kantian idealism. It is not subjective, as it is in things rather than in me. It is not relative, because the relation between the ‘phenomenon’ and the ‘thing’ is not that of appearance to reality, but merely that of the part to the whole.” (Cf. *ibid.*, p. 306)

³⁸⁷ “All these images act and react to upon one another in all their elementary parts according to constant laws which I call laws of nature.” (Cf. *ibid.*, p. 1)

³⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 13

diffractive approach on matter and meaning.

According to Barad, mind and world, meaning and matter, are intra-actively entangled by diffraction. In *Meeting the Universe Halfway* she describes diffraction as follows:

Diffraction is a material-discursive phenomenon that challenges the presumed inherent separability of subject and object, nature and culture, fact and value, human and non-human, organic and non-organic, epistemology and ontology, materiality and discursivity. [...] *Diffraction* is not merely about differences, and certainly not differences in any absolute sense, but *about the entangled nature of differences that matter*. (...) *Diffraction is a material practice for making a difference, for topologically reconfiguring connections.*³⁸⁹

What is argued here has huge consequences for scientific and ontological thought, as well as for ethics and politics, because: "We are not merely differently situated in the world; 'each of us' is part of the intra-active ongoing articulation of the world in its differential mattering." Such a view creates a network of responsibility towards the world, the opposite of assuming that we are mere spectators of the film of life, because it means that any kind of thought has material consequences within a large topology of elements, equivalent to the images in the Bergsonian system of thought. The happenings on Solaris such as the materialization of the visitors become a symptom of Barad's diffractive entanglement of mind and matter, actually based on Niels Bohr's quantum physics. Barad relates to Bohr by stressing his position as being non-dualist and adding perception to realism, anyway, a position close to the Bergsonian theory:

(W)hile Bohr's understanding of quantum physics leads him to reject the possibility that scientists can gain access to the "things-in-themselves", that is, the objects of investigation as they exist outside human conceptual frameworks, he does not subscribe to a Kantian noumena-phenomena

³⁸⁹ Karen Barad, *op. cit.*, p. 381

distinction. And while Bohr's practice of physics shows that he holds a realist attitude toward his subject matter, he is not a realist in any conventional sense, since he believes that the interaction between the objects of investigation and what he calls "the agencies of observation" is not determinable and therefore cannot be "subtracted out" to leave a representation of the world as it exists independently of human beings.³⁹⁰

However, the following reflection is not meant as a comment on Barad's very complex theory but as the attempt to transpose some aspects of Barad's *quantum-ontology* to the solaristic system. Such an endeavor constitutes a way to reassess cinema as an apparatus-based art and as a form of intra-active entanglement with reality; a concept going beyond that of the cinematographic apparatus of mechanical reproduction, which Walter Benjamin refers to³⁹¹, and which we will inquire into in this context.

In "Solaris" reality is actually reproduced while a mysterious process is taking place, in which the reproduced reality starts to interact in form of the visitors who materialize by intra-action, so I will argue. That which processes this reproduction of reality is the planet Solaris, from now on to be considered as a conceptual persona (the same function we have attributed before to Harey): the planet acts with its own purpose, even if in puzzling ways. Solaris embodies the being of a giant brain, a processor of past human reality apparently reacting to x-rays. However, I propose the planet to be a cosmic apparatus, an unknown form of organic machine. I further suggest to think about the planet (and of cinema) as an 'intra-active apparatus', entangled with the scientists (filmmaker/spectators) via the agency of the visitors (film characters). Solaris (re)produces fragments of reality in the form of objects and beings by sensing into the mind of the humans while they sleep. This dynamic situation strangely resembles Barad's *agential realism*, which also operates with the term apparatus, although coming from a different context:

³⁹⁰ Karen Barad, op. cit., pp. 30-31

³⁹¹ Benjamin proposes that through the intensive permeation of reality by the cinematographic apparatus, we would have an access to "immediate reality". See: Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Third Version, p. 233

Apparatuses are specific material reconfigurations of the world that do not merely emerge in time but interactively reconfigure space-time matters as part of the ongoing dynamism of becoming.³⁹²

Solaris is literally “reconfiguring space-time matters as part of the ongoing dynamism of becoming.” Yet to elaborate a solaristic relation between Barad’s apparatus and the one of film and cinema, it is firstly necessary to distinguish both concepts. I will therefore start with the concept of technological apparatus in film-theory, stemming from Walter Benjamin. In what follows then I will extend the term of the “cinematographic apparatus”, which Benjamin has coined to refer to specific technological equipment, to encompass any instrument that interpenetrates reality, and briefly analyze Benjamin’s relation to technology.

2. From Benjamin’s Apparatus to the Solaristic Brain

In earlier chapters, I have explained Benjamin’s claim that we are facing in cinema and film the images of a techno-apparatus, which does not integrate but *penetrate into* that which is natural human perception. This apparatus is selecting, recording and shaping a tissue of reproduced and assembled reality, producing thereby *immediate* reality, more real for the viewer than the reality it depicts. However, the term is used by Benjamin in a positive sense of seeing technology as a utopian device (I will follow up this idea later) to access something we would not have accessed without. I recall:

In the studio the mechanical equipment [*Apparatur* in German, a word kept in other English versions as ‘apparatus’] has penetrated so deeply into reality

³⁹² Karen Barad, *op. cit.*, p.142 and p. 146

that its pure aspect freed from the foreign substance of the equipment [again Benjamin refers here to the 'apparatur'] is the result of a special procedure, namely, the shooting by the specially adjusted camera and the mounting of the shot together with other similar ones. The equipment-free aspect of reality here has become the height of artifice; the sight of immediate reality has become an orchid in the land of technology.³⁹³

However, Benjamin's concept has evolved into a different reading: during the 1960ies, the so-called *apparatus theory*³⁹⁴, which inquired critically into the technology of cinematographic reproduction, describing the construction of the "impression of reality" as an ideological illusion. Jean-Louis Baudry introduces this idea based on a special reading of Plato's "Allegory of the Cave", which he proposes to reassess "from the special perspective of the cinematographic apparatus"³⁹⁵: "Plato's prisoner is the victim of an illusion of reality, (...) he is the prey of an impression, of *an impression of reality*."³⁹⁶ Thereby Plato "is careful to emphasize the artificial aspect of reproduced reality. It is the apparatus that creates the illusion, and not the degree of fidelity with the Real: here *the prisoners have been chained since childhood*, and it will therefore not be the reproduction of this or that specific aspect of that reality, which they do not know, which will lead them to attribute a greater degree of reality to the illusion to which they are subject."³⁹⁷

According to *apparatus theory* the illusory effect of cinema is based on the invisibility of the cine-apparatus and functions due to a subject-centered effect, which satisfies an archaic need or desire³⁹⁸ and is "more-than-real"³⁹⁹:

³⁹³ Walter Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 233

³⁹⁴ *Apparatus theory* was introduced by Jean-Louis Comolli and Jean-Louis Baudry; it emerged in France and Germany in the 1960ies and 70ies.

³⁹⁵ Jean-Louis Baudry, "The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in Cinema", *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*, p. 303

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 303

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 305

³⁹⁸ "It is indeed desire as such, i.e., desire of desire, the nostalgia for a state in which desire has been satisfied through the transfer of a perception to a formation resembling

“the cinematographic apparatus is unique in that *it offers the subject perceptions ‘of reality’ whose status seems similar to that of presentations experienced as perception.*”⁴⁰⁰

The idea of such an apparatus intervention and ‘reality-effect’ seems constitutive for the solaristic system at first sight, as the planet Solaris seems such an apparatus creating a “Solaris-effect”. Yet the comparison fails if we think about the illusion of reality that Solaris would provide: the cave dweller in Plato’s cave is chained and has no reference to outer reality, which is known to the spectator of cinema. In a more contemporary reading, the cinema spectator is actually the one who seeks the light out of the cave, as Colin McGinn suggests:

(I)t is our experience of the empirical world *outside* the movie theater that is analogous to Plato’s cave dwellers (as he himself supposed), and our experience *within* the movie theater is analogous to the escapee’s experience *outside* the cave. That is, we gain a special insight into reality by watching movies that we don’t obtain by means of our ordinary empirical experience. To put it in Platonic terms, we can gain access to Truth, Goodness and Beauty by watching films—they give us a conduit to those “higher” realities.⁴⁰¹

This reading of the allegory in the context of film philosophy is actually much closer to Benjamin’s reasoning: the apparatus gives us access to “truth” or to that which we have called the real of reality, the ground for the “solaristic claim”. The claim says that the *real of reality manifests itself in film and becomes graspable for human knowledge through film*. We have argued for this by taking Benjamin’s “immediate reality”⁴⁰² as a synonym of the real of reality. In this sense film is, in the solaristic philosophy, regarded as the representative of how *apparatus-produced images of reality* and reality itself

hallucination, which seems to be activated by the cinematographic apparatus.” (Cf. *ibid.*, p. 314) Jean-Louis Baudry appropriates this concept of desire from Freud.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 314

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 314

⁴⁰¹ Colin McGinn, *op.cit.*, pp. 156-157

⁴⁰² Walter Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 233

are correlated, inquiring into the real of film as a placeholder for ontological truth. This conception of truth withdraws from the area of the symbolic.

In contrast to the advocates of *apparatus theory*, for Benjamin, this special characteristic of the cine-apparatus does not constitute an illusion. The reality of the cine-apparatus is just of a different kind than natural perception and eventually brings “things ‘closer’”⁴⁰³. It presents reality *on the basis “of the thoroughgoing permeation of reality with mechanical equipment”*⁴⁰⁴. This penetration of reality by technology is, just as the one of a surgeon at work, a penetration “deeply into its web”⁴⁰⁵. This enables the idea of a real image from the inside of reality, which only film can provide and which Walter Benjamin calls “immediate reality” or “an orchid in the land of technology”⁴⁰⁶. Cinema is *more-than-real*, as Baudry claims, but for reasons opposite to those he gives. Cinema is more than real because we are confronted in it with something, which lies in the deep ground of the paradox of reproduction. What from reality is exactly reproduced? It is this *more-than-real* or immediate reality, which I have called “the real of reality” and tried to explain throughout.

Integrated into a different tradition, Barad refers to a concept of apparatus independent from film, as an *agent of intra-active entanglements*, relying on Foucault’s concept of “dispositif”, which is frequently translated as apparatus and defined as “a system of relations that can be established between (...) [its] elements”⁴⁰⁷. I will show in what follows that even Benjamin’s apparatus, which clearly refers to a machine, can be interpreted as the carrier of such a system of relations: the planet Solaris is both, *device* and *dispositif* in one. The solaristic system may even be regarded as the

⁴⁰³ Ibid., p. 223

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 234

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 233

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 233. Note: In German Benjamin refers to the blue flower (instead of an orchid), which is a symbol of the era of German romanticism, symbolizing the metaphysical aspiration of eternity.

⁴⁰⁷ Michel Foucault, “The Confession of the Flesh” (1977) interview, in: *Power/Knowledge Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, p. 194

attempt to clarify the intra-active entanglements of the cine-apparatus, which on *Solaris* has a nature similar to Epstein's question: "Will images created from this other optical system, this kind of robot-brain that is the cinematographic apparatus, have as great an influence upon the evolution of culture and civilization?"⁴⁰⁸

Benjamin's filmic apparatus is actually the conceptual result of an approach, which designates a special relation between technology and man. The apparatus has the characteristic that it *can* be operated by human intervention, but there is no such necessary condition. In order to better understand this apparatus I propose to briefly inquire into how Benjamin relates Man and *Technik* – translated as *technics* – in general.⁴⁰⁹ *Technik* is for Benjamin divided between a first and second one⁴¹⁰. The first one only exists "in fusion with the ritual"⁴¹¹ – it is still related to magic rituals and the human body, thus apparently "underdeveloped" when compared to the one of machines, the second *Technik*⁴¹², which is best translated with "technology". The difference between the two sets Benjamin in the following: "the first *Technik* completely relies on the human, whereas the second one as less as possible."⁴¹³ Here Benjamin describes the switch from human to post-human. Yet he emphasizes that the objective of technology (the second *Technik*) is not the domination of nature. This is indeed the "perspective of the first *Technik*"⁴¹⁴, whereas the second *Technik* (technology) involves art and is not

⁴⁰⁸ Jean Epstein, *op. cit.*, p. xi

⁴⁰⁹ I refer hereby to Hyun Kang Kim who inspired me with her essay "The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology", in: *Thinking Reality and Time Through Film*, pp. 128–137. Her essay has emphasized the need to understand Walter Benjamin's theory of film in the larger context of his work; his concept of technology linked to a utopia of an interplay between nature, Man and technology thus came to my attention.

⁴¹⁰ This division is present in the *second edition* of the Artwork essay, see: Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften VII*, pp. 350 – 384

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 359 (translation mine – C.R.)

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, p. 359 (translation mine – C.R.)

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 359 (translation mine – C.R.)

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 359 (translation mine – C.R.)

opposed to nature, but rather constitutes “an interplay between nature and man.” Furthermore, according to Benjamin:

the function of art today to be socially decisive is the practice of that interplay. This is especially true for film. Film is there to train Man in those apperceptions and reactions, which are conditioned by the handling of an apparatus, and whose role in his life increases nearly daily.⁴¹⁵ (translation mine – C.R.)

Benjamin anticipates here not only the contemporary tendency of our yet increasing reliance on apparatus-generated realities, but also emphasizes a switch of perspective, in which film constitutes the practice. As a footnote in the *Artwork* essay shows, Benjamin believes that the utopia of the first *Technik* concerning the human body, love or death will be “discarded in favor of the ones [the utopias] concerning society and technology”⁴¹⁶ but later be retaken: Benjamin somehow anticipates a *reconciliation* between technology, which is “as little human as possible”, and the human body, which is the operator of the first *Technik*. As Hyun Kang Kim evokes⁴¹⁷ Benjamin has thus anticipated the concept of cyborgs much later introduced into theoretical reflection by Haraway⁴¹⁸.

Important to underline in this context is the switch of perspectives from the human to the post-human or even the non-human – all to which the human suddenly has access. It means a possibility to overcome the subjective condition. Kim points out: “Technology makes precisely this change of perspective from in-itself to for-itself possible. According to Hegel, this change in perspective means the truth. In this spirit, technology is for Benjamin the place of truth par excellence.”⁴¹⁹ This change for human thought

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., p. 359 - 360

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., p. 665 (translation mine – C.R.)

⁴¹⁷ Hyun Kang Kim, *op.cit.*, p. 131

⁴¹⁸ See: Donna Haraway, “A Manifesto for Cyborgs. Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s.”, in: *Feminism, Postmodernism*

⁴¹⁹ Hyun Kang Kim, *op.cit.*, p. 130

will again and again be the issue of this thesis, as it is considered to be probably the most important consequence of the emergence of film for philosophy. It enables a new reliance of philosophy on film, in order to take a perspective beyond the human. It took philosophy nearly one hundred years to understand this new aspect of its intrinsic relation with film.

This is probably also the reason why it has become so popular in the last two decades to use movies for philosophical reflection – as a complement or as a device for thinking. The attraction of film for philosophers consists in this very fact that we finally can see what we see through the eyes of a non-human apparatus, which penetrates into reality in a way human perception cannot do; thus Benjamin describes, as we have seen throughout, the apparatus being a device to enable the “equipment-free aspect of reality”, providing through the procedure of “interpenetration of reality” the “vision of immediate reality”. Although it may seem like a contradiction, this invisibility of the technical apparatus in the resulting images is a post-human vision, a perspective, which is not purely human any more, achieved through the fusion of human perception and technological possibilities of a machine.

What are the consequences of this overcoming of the human condition? Cinema can be designated as a post-human extension, a technological tool of such nature that it extends human consciousness, in the manner Marshall McLuhan addresses a century after film’s invention on technological media in general:

Today (...) we approach the final phase of the extensions of man – the technological simulation of consciousness, when the creative process of knowing will be collectively and corporately extended to the whole of human society, much as we have already extended our senses and our nerves by the various media.⁴²⁰

In our context I want to stress that the invention of film has been the pioneer of the technological media-extension of human senses, nerves and, so I have to add, human thinking. Let me make this last point clear – it is crucial to close

⁴²⁰ Marshall Mac Luhan, *op. cit.*, p. 3

the first step of this chapter's analysis: the cinematic extension deeply affects the entangled human relation between reality and mind; such that the recorded and reproduced sense transports the subject outside itself and becomes a new device for cognition. The implicit shift for human thought is based on a change of the subject's stance towards reality.

As I have mentioned, there is a link between Benjamin's vision of apparatus and his utopia of reconciliation between technology and the human body. The concept of apparatus for Benjamin is not just the filmic apparatus, but a technological device to enable post-human capacities. Thereby the filmic apparatus performs an interpenetration with reality and records reality making it reproducible and thus accessible to human perception. Film is considered by Benjamin a practice to deal with the new and non-human perspective of technology provided by the apparatus. The apparatus can even lead us to undertake time travel and to access new forces. Benjamin describes, at another point of his work, a vision of a new cosmic dimension for humankind, achieved through technology at the service of humanity:

For it [humankind] a *physis* is emerging in technology, in which its contact with the cosmos takes a form, which is new and different from that in nations and families. Enough to remind the experience of speed, to give energy for readying humankind for unforeseen travels into the interior of time, to find the rhythms at which those deemed incurable would recuperate like in former times in high mountains or southern shores."⁴²¹ (translation mine – C.R.)

This cosmic dimension and travels exploring time are for Benjamin a further stage of technology. Cinema, as we have seen, by subscribing it to Bazin's utopia of total cinema, is a certain substitution of nature. At the same time, this substitution is a *conflation* with nature, the reconciliation of technology and nature in a further developed stage. Yet are we not already, in a certain sense, time travelers when we watch movies? What makes the apparatus develop into a time-travel-machine?

Most fascinating to mention in this context is Barad's idea of intra-

⁴²¹ Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften IV*, p. 147

active time, incorporating a truly cinematographic dimension:

(S)pace and time (like matter) are phenomenal, that is, they are intra-actively produced in the making of phenomena; either space nor time exist as determinate givens outside of phenomena. As a result of the iterative nature of intra-active practices that constitute phenomena, the "past" and the "future" are iteratively reconfigured and enfolded through one another: phenomena cannot be located in space and time; rather, phenomena are material entanglements that "extend" across different spaces and times. (...) Neither the past nor the future is ever closed.⁴²²

This implies of course that „the past is open to change. It can be redeemed, productively reconfigured in an iterative unfolding of spacetime matter'. (...)The 'past' was never simply there to begin with, and the 'future' is not what will unfold, but 'past' and 'future' are iteratively reconfigured and enfolded through the world's ongoing intra-activity“.⁴²³

Maybe the movie “Solaris” can give a further answer, because the planet Solaris is somehow intra-actively non-human: it is beyond the human, yet with capacities humans would acquire through technology. Benjamin's idea of contact with the cosmos is further reminiscent of “Solaris”, in a completely unexpected way. Time is restituted in a new way on the planet: somehow the past has changed by Harey's second existence on Solaris. Being her different or not from the first one, it is the meaning of this existence, which changes the first existence.

I will suggest that Benjamin's utopia to reconcile technology and the human body / nature sets Solaris as an apparatus of a new kind: a non-human yet organic apparatus, which dominates the relation between Man and nature/reality in a way that puzzles the human, because control is lost: nature is

⁴²² Karen Barad, *op. cit.*, p. 383

⁴²³ Rick Dolphijn, Iris van der Tuin, “‘Matter feels, converses, suffers, desires, yearns and remembers’ - Interview with Karen Barad”, in: *New Materialisms: Interviews and Cartographies*, p. 67

presented through the planet in a completely new way, just as Benjamin's apparatus does.

In this context let me recall the opening scenes of the film "Solaris" on Earth: the camera penetrates into nature thereby achieving, based on time, a beautiful portrait. Hereby the camera conflates organically with what is filmed. A bit later the conflict between Kris Kelvin and his father specifically represents the conflict between nature and man: "the cosmos is too fragile" says the father, being concerned about the technological devices that Kelvin would use to destroy the planet. Yet the Solaris brain, a form of cosmic nature, somehow reconciles Kelvin through love with nature: Kelvin has to just accept how things go and science is powerless. He loves Harey and kneels before his father, asking for forgiveness. He does so on Solaris, on Earth he would not have acted this way.

In this context I propose to consider the contemporary digital worlds as apparatus-produced and therefore as a logical consequence of film, part of the tending towards an actualization of Bazin's total cinema. Bazin's myth designates the desire of a total re-creation of the world, an idea, which according to Bazin *only partly has been fulfilled by film*: "cinema has not yet been invented" ⁴²⁴ he argues, and the contemporary evolution of digital computation has shown him right.

Following this line of thought, if we comprehend film's reproduction as an extended sphere of human perception of reality – a technological doubling of reality, constituting an own virtual reality – then film has been the first medium providing us with post-human capacities. Photography and, as a second stage, film are the first *apparatus-based media* making us think on their techno-ontological consequences. Film permits us to look at human perception from the outside, a perspective of thought until then considered impossible. "Technology makes precisely this change of perspective from in-itself to for-itself possible."⁴²⁵ The consequences are intra-active.

The described tendency is of special contemporary pertinence as film

⁴²⁴ André Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, p. 21

⁴²⁵ Hyun Kang Kim, *op. cit.*, p. 130

and real-image-based media in general are constitutive of our technoglobalized world in which reality appears as contingent, multiple and virtual, extended and exchangeable by apparatus-like machines: we can switch from one reality to the next one. The consequent permanent switch of contexts absorbing our mental and sensory attention has deepened as a contemporary phenomenon: the omnipresence of a mobile cyberspace has changed everyday life; the continuous reliance on virtual media in entertainment, culture, social life and information has become a mobile reality of global dimension, grown out of our sci-fi-imagination in the shadow of control society.

However, our conscious thinking about the referred change is slowed, our contemporary *media technological condition of being* is a process we like to ignore. The underlying need for discursive intelligibility underpins solaristic philosophy as a necessary tendency. Our reliance on technology-generated virtual media worlds is constantly growing: they further have a physical connection to our fingertips as a prolongation of our thoughts, received by an apparatus-based device. In “Solaris” the apparatus reads the mind directly and confronts man with his subconscious desires, the most human part of human beings. One may protest that the apparatus in “Solaris” is a brain, an organic planet and thus part of cosmic nature; it obviously refuses the knowledge of science, doesn’t act in logical rules and offers self-reflection of the human condition via the power of conscience and love.

I argue in response that nothing speaks against the hypothesis of Solaris being a super-intelligent, *organic machine*, in the post-human cyborg sense mentioned before.⁴²⁶ Solaris is not human yet creates post-human and

⁴²⁶ The technological advances of during the last fifteen years have proved that such a machine might be possible in not such a distant future: “New paradigms will use advances in quantum computation and molecular and nano-electronics to devise radically faster computers to solve problems previously described as “uncomputable,” such as full-scale simulations of our biosphere or surgical simulations. Viewing cells as computational devices will help enable the design of next generation computers that feature self organization, self repair, and adaptive characteristics that we see in biological systems.” (Cf. Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, p. 384; referred to as “NSF (National Science Foundation)

trans-human circumstances, tending towards Bazin's total cinema. *Solaris* may be claimed to be the achievement of the myth of total cinema, as mysterious and entangled as cinema itself. If its vision is to be an entire re-creation of the world – how can something as complex as the organic world not be part of it?

A solaristic precursor might be the idea of the internet of the mind, the “total brain” which would link humans, nature and machines in one stream of consciousness, which would share feelings as well as information and thoughts, a human utopia since the 18th Century (mesmerism, telepathic communication, etc.). The essay-film “Worldbrain” by Stéphane Degoutin and Gwenola Wagon approaches this total utopia, which lies not only at the origin of cinema, but also the one of the internet:

Mankind is building an infrastructure in which we store the content of our brains. We call this infrastructure the internet. The internet is not an abstraction. It exists in a physical space, made up of data centers spread around the world and linked together by fiber-optic cables. Data centers can be seen as the result of an attempt to externalize our brains. They can be seen as a network of warehouses, storing the content of our brains. This physical space can be seen as a gigantic machine, that contains fragments of our thoughts, of our emotions, of our lives...As for now, this machine is very basic. (...) but the machine's engine is still under construction. Its immense size makes one realize the hugeness of what could soon be put into action.⁴²⁷

TESTIMONY TO CONGRESS, March 1, 2000”)

⁴²⁷ Stéphane Degoutin, Gwenola Wagon, *op. cit.* (available online)



Solaris is such a universal brain. Its origins are unknown but its reactions to the human condition are beyond the human grasp of intelligibility – it reacts to x-rays and energy waves in the most unexpected ways. Solaris is somehow an organic, living machine, a quickly mutating cyborg and replica world producer. There even might be the possibility that Nick Bostrom’s claim for a computer-simulated world preconceived by the character’s ancestors, finds its application on Solaris (I will follow up on this later, in the next chapter). Indeed, main character Kris Kelvin could very well be a post-human visitor without being conscious of his own condition. It would be then a world where the human being is dispensable - a total cinema in which not only the world but also its habitants are a re-creation, so perfect that it is as organic as film images are, yet stimulating our tactile as well as our visual and audible senses.

3. Worldmaking Measurements

I have argued so far to understand Barad’s quantum-ontology as a way to reassess cinema as an apparatus-based art and form of intra-active entanglement with reality, going beyond the concept of apparatus and

⁴²⁸ Hannah Devlin, “Scientists bring telepathy closer with brain-to-brain interface”, in: *The Times*, February 18, 2013 (available online)

mechanical reproduction that Benjamin refers to. With what follows I attempt to deepen Barad's theory by expanding on how the filmic apparatus and the Solaris apparatus will conceptually extend each other. I will thereby deepen the intra-active apparatus nature of the planet Solaris: it refuses to be measured by the human methods of science, but the planet is, inversely, an agent that measures the humans in its own way. Two aspects are important to conceive the apparatus of intra-active agentialism:

Firstly Barad develops her concept of intra-active, dynamic apparatus by interrogating and expanding the concept of Foucault's "dispositif", designating an organized "system of relations" between the elements of a "heterogeneous ensemble" (all kind of possible thoughts and forms)⁴²⁹. To this concept of apparatus Barad critically proposes the necessity to deliver an explanation on the nature of the established relations between matter and thought. Furthermore, she criticizes Foucault's notion of biopower as antiquated:

(...)Foucault does not articulate, including the precise nature of the relationship between discursive practices and material phenomena; a dynamic and agential conception of materiality that takes account of the materialization of all bodies (nonhuman as well as human and that makes possible a genealogy of the practices through which these distinctions are made); and the ways in which contemporary technoscientific practices provide for much more intimate, pervasive, and profound reconfigurings of bodies, power, knowledge, and their linkage than anticipated by Foucault's notion of biopower (which might have been adequate to eighteenth-century practices, but not contemporary ones)."⁴³⁰

⁴²⁹ "What I'm trying to pick out with this term is, firstly, a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements." (Cf. Michel Foucault, *op.cit.*, p. 194).

⁴³⁰ Karen Barad, *op. cit.*, p. 200

Barad searches for a more encompassing, diffractive and agential kind of concept than the one in Foucault – a concept which would not enter in contradiction or stand behind the level of contemporary techno-science research. That is why she tries to adapt the ontological method of thought from quantum physics, transferring it into philosophy. Barad thus proposes a new form of quantum-ontological “intra-active” and diffractive thinking, to be distinguished from reflection.⁴³¹ It calls for a new kind of causality based on Bohr’s ideas of quantum physics, wherein measurement plays a central role, yet in a new non-dualist sense:

Bohr’s epistemological framework (...) offers a new understanding of fundamental philosophical issues such as the relationship between knower and known, the role of measurement, questions of meaning making and concept use, (...) the nature of causality, and the nature of reality. (...) He is explicit in stating that in his opinion quantum physics shows that the world surely does not abide by the ontology of Newtonian physics.⁴³²

What does this contradiction with “Newtonian physics” mean and how does its rejection renew ontology? Let me add one further remark to better understand the context of such thinking within our scope of analysis, which so far engages in a cross-thinking between the entangled condition of film and philosophical methods of “reflection”, although tending towards its limits: the understanding of the real of reality in terms of a sphere for truth withdraws from intelligible grasp. Yet should that which I can assume as true in terms of scientific knowledge not be the same as that which is measurable?

The origin of the common claim to equate truth (reality) and science goes back to the physician Max Planck who famously asserted: “That which

⁴³¹ “In contrast to reflecting apparatuses, like mirrors, which produce images-more or less faithful-of objects placed a distance from the mirror, diffraction gratings are instruments that produce patterns that mark differences in the relative characters (i.e., amplitude and phase) of individual waves as they combine.” (Cf. *ibid.*, p. 81)

⁴³² *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31

can be measured exists – Was man messen kann, das existiert auch.“⁴³³ This sentence frequently is understood by switching “exists” with “is real”, as Heidegger famously does 1953 in a lecture in Munich indirectly quoting Max Planck with the reference: “*Real* is what *can* be *measured* – Wirklich ist was sich messen läßt.”⁴³⁴

Heidegger does so in a critical sense: he is against the claim of natural science that existence or reality are considered to be graspable by measurement. But is that kind of measurement of existence the same kind of *being of reality* which I grasp by filming – that kind of truth, on which I rely by reasoning? Is the film camera an apparatus of measurement transforming Max Planck’s sentence into: *That which can be filmed exists or is real*? “Solaris” clearly challenges the usual demand of graspability for objective knowledge put by natural science: in the narrative the planet Solaris is diffractive. It is a brain, which is intra-actively entangled with the human subconscious. The scientists have no possibility to know or understand the planet or read the mysterious manifestations of its intra-activity. However Barad’s theory seems to enable the understanding of this characteristic of the planet by calling attention that meaning and matter intra-act: thoughts, emotions and feeling, according to Barad have physical consequences⁴³⁵. Somehow, the surface of the planet is symptomatic for this intra-action, moving and changing colours, while the emotional density on the planet increases.

⁴³³ Max Planck, *Wege zur physikalischen Erkenntnis: Reden und Vorträge*, p.44

⁴³⁴ Martin Heidegger, „Wissenschaft und Besinnung“, in: *Vorträge und Aufsätze 1929 – 1953*, p.54

⁴³⁵ Rick Dolphijn, Iris van der Tuin, “‘Matter feels, converses, suffers, desires, yearns and remembers’ - Interview with Karen Barad”, in: *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies*



Barad's non-representational approach, by enhancing the entangled relation of matter and meaning, words and objects, confirms the endeavor of the solaristic system: the cinematograph as well as the Solaris apparatus could be seen as a "tool for measurement" of the real, understood in the following way:

Measurements are agential practices, which are not simply revelatory but performative: they help constitute and are a constitutive part of what is being measured. In other words, measurements are *intra-actions* (not interactions): the agencies of observation are inseparable from that which is observed. Measurements are world-making: matter and meaning do not pre-exist, but rather are co-constituted via measurement intra-actions.⁴³⁶

In this sense the filmic apparatus as well as the Solaris apparatus are *world-making* and go beyond reflection: films are not mirrors but the continuation of life (to recall Syberberg). On the one hand we apparently have the image of reality, but on the other hand this image dominates reality, and tends to substitute it, becoming real in itself. Thus film/the planet Solaris enables us to double our *being-in-the-world*, to overcome the subjective condition by reproducing it: we reach the condition of *being-in-film* or *being-on-Solaris*. Mind and world are one, and the cinematographic apparatus helps this new kind of causality, which Barad claims as based on Bohr's quantum physics:

For example, while Bohr's understanding of quantum physics leads him to

⁴³⁶ Karen Barad, "What is the Measure of Nothingness? Infinity, Virtuality, Justice", in: *100 Notes – 100 Thoughts*, dOCUMENTA (13), p. 6

reject the possibility that scientists can gain access to the "things-in-themselves," that is, the objects of investigation as they exist outside human conceptual frameworks, he does not subscribe to a Kantian noumena-phenomena distinction. And while Bohr's practice of physics shows that he holds a realist attitude toward his subject matter, he is not a realist in any conventional sense, since he believes that the interaction between the objects of investigation and what he calls "the agencies of observation" is not determinable and therefore cannot be "subtracted out" to leave a representation of the world as it exists independently of human beings.⁴³⁷

Barad's non-representational approach, by enhancing the entangled relation of matter and meaning, words and objects, influences our entire endeavor of analysis: language itself must ultimately be seen as a kind of "tool for measurement", and like any of its kind, it conditions its results and sets the production of what it talks about.

In this context it is worth to mention Paul Watzlawick, the author of *How real is reality?*, in which he speaks of the discoverer of the uncertainty relation, the quantum physicist Werner Heisenberg, contemporary of Niels Bohr, who establishes a link between language and its sphere of reference as an example of how we explore a reality conditioned by our way of exploration:

The reality of which we can speak is never reality in itself but a 'known' reality, in many cases even a reality we have designed. If it is objected against this latter formulation that, after all, there is an objective world completely independent of our thoughts, which takes place or can take place without our intervention, and which we really mean to approach in [scientific] investigation, so to this first so obvious objection must be hold against that, nevertheless, the very word "there" is derived from the human language and therefore cannot mean something that is not related to our ability of cognition. For us, there is only is the world in which the word *there is* has a sense.⁴³⁸
(translation mine – C.R.)

⁴³⁷ Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, pp. 30-31

⁴³⁸ Werner Heisenberg, *Ordnung der Wirklichkeit*, p. 59

Therefore Watzlawick grasps reality as a potential, something we do not find but create, merely in the sense of an intra-active entanglement (“measurements are worldmaking”⁴³⁹) and comparable to Heidegger’s possibilities of Dasein, which are always yet to come. However, this condition is a correlationist one, because it does claim that we cannot distinguish between our perception of the world and the world itself; although it offers a way out: that we are a creative part of the world by our perception and cognition, which is part of the world. It further refuses the static dualism of representationalism: It would mean that the apple becomes an apple with the meaning of apple because of us. There might be other meanings of the apple we will not explore.

Another example might be that we hear sound because we *can*, we are biologically constituted to hear, and we see images for the same reason. Both are properties of the being of reality and are reproducible in their very being, as measured by certain apparatuses. This would also imply that we are co-creators of the real of reality – understood as a flowing solaristic substance, visible on the surface of the Solaris ocean.

Barad further adds, that the exact same real even presents different physical being (in terms of its properties) when measured, as it is the case of light:

If the measurement intra-action plays a constitutive role in what is measured, then it matters how something is explored. In fact, this is born out empirically in experiments with matter (and energy): when electrons (or light) are measured using one kind of apparatus, they are waves; if they are measured in a complementary way, they are particles. Notice that what we are talking about here is not simply some object *reacting* differently to different probings but *being* differently. What is at issue is the very nature of nature. A quantum ontology deconstructs the classical one: there are no pre-existing individual objects with determinate boundaries and properties that precede some interaction, nor are there any meanings that could be used to describe their

⁴³⁹ Karen Barad, *op. cit.*, p.6

behaviors; rather, determinate boundaries and properties of objects-within-phenomena, and determinate contingent meanings, are enacted through specific intra-actions, where *phenomena* are the ontological inseparability of intra-acting agencies.⁴⁴⁰

That the very nature of reality is at stake means that there is a quality of being to be measurable and in consequence, reproducible as that by which it is measured. Film is the example here. Reality becomes image and sound because we measure it as such. This does not make image and sound a property of our mind, but indicates an intra-active relation of matter and meaning: reality becomes reproducible in image and sound, because we are there to see reality in image- and sound-worlds and because of the cinematographic apparatus. But that does not mean that the transfer of the real of reality from the thing to its reproduction would not take place, for all the reasons we have elaborated in the previous chapters.

⁴⁴⁰ Karen Barad, op.cit., p. 6-7

XIV.
THE REAL, THE VIRTUAL
AND THE SUBJECTIVE SIDE OF KNOWLEDGE

1. The Virtuality of Reality

Plato's allegory of the cave is frequently associated with film as a *principle of illusion of reality* and we have opposed to such reading so far. Yet what further observations in extension of our analysis are still to be drawn from this tale? That which actually is described with Plato's allegory indeed corresponds more to a metaphor of our relation to reality, than being a characterization of the principles of film: the narrative opposes light and shadow: we have on the one hand the world of shadows, a delusionary reality, which is actually taken to be real by the cave dwellers, and, on the other hand, there is the light of the real or of truth, shining so clear and so bright, that the escaping philosopher has to let his eyes adapt in order to see. The one who seeks the truth has to learn how to see. However the doubting question remains open - does that which the philosopher sees now, after adapting, correspond to the truth?

But what if the other people, those who stayed in the cave, would argue the following: that due to their habituation, they are able to comprehend the shadows as a key to the real, because the shadows, at least, are a property of

reality. But in order to argue so they would need the notion of their limitation of perception, and this notion fits the one of the film spectators. (Therefore, the only possibility for employing the allegory as a metaphor for film as an ontological principle is if we were to rewrite its ending.)

Plato's Cave insinuates that we are deluded by our perception, starting a certain philosophical tradition, which corresponds to a persisting doubt haunting us when facing sensible reality. This doubt is part of the human condition of perception, our way to access the external world. In everyday life we continuously have the impression of the world as a whole, a consistent reality composed by certain characteristics and laws, which we seem to know – yet can we be sure of this perception? Could we not, in truth, be sitting in Plato's Cave? Let us examine this doubt closer, relying thereby on René Descartes in the *Meditations on First Philosophy* and look at the way how he argues to resolve it. One argument of Descartes' skepticism questions whether we can distinguish the actual reality from dreaming.

In what follows I will argue that the old Cartesian doubt can be read as a doubt describing a general '*virtuality of reality*'. I argue so by designating the Cartesian dreamworld as a *virtual reality*, a term frequently used in contemporary theory to characterize the computer generated realities, yet which could also be referring to film. Descartes' dreamworld is, in fact, a strong virtual reality in the sense of depicting an illusionary, mind-generated presence, which cannot be distinguished by perception from actual, physical reality. Therefore, it casts doubt on the true character of reality. Reality could be virtual. Descartes argues:

At the present moment, however, I certainly look upon this paper with eyes wide awake; the head which I now move is not asleep; I extend this hand consciously and with express purpose, and I perceive it; the occurrences in sleep are not so distinct as all this. But I cannot forget that, at other times I have been deceived in sleep by similar illusions; (...) I perceive so clearly that there exist no certain marks by which the state of waking can ever be distinguished from sleep (...).⁴⁴¹

⁴⁴¹ René Descartes, "Of the things of which I may doubt", in: *Meditations 1*, p. 113

Descartes then assumes that thought can master perception:

And finally, considering that all the same thoughts that we have when we are awake can also come to us when we are asleep, without any one of them then being true, I resolved to pretend that nothing which had ever entered my mind was any more true than the illusions of my dreams. But immediately afterwards I became aware that, while I decided thus to think that everything was false, it followed necessarily that I who thought thus must be something; and observing that this truth: *I think therefore I am*, was so certain and so evident.⁴⁴²

Descartes assumes here that, although I cannot be sure whether I am awake or dreaming, my thoughts are true and give me a clue as to the truth of my existence. *Thinking means reliable existence* to Descartes: thinking guarantees being real in the sense of existing and from there on Descartes can distinguish virtual reality (dreaming) and real reality (being awake). We should know by thinking, so he would argue, that the virtual state (dream in his case) is a state of delusion. That which is virtual thus belongs to an illusory, unreal domain for Descartes, in clear opposition to the “real domain” he is in when he is awake. In that sense Descartes stands for what Barad and Haraway would call thinking based on reflection. Descartes sets up the dualist thought of modernity, setting all these oppositional dichotomies like interior and exterior, body and mind, the illusional (and fictional) as *opposed* to true reality and knowledge.

Consequently, Descartes is doubting the reliability of sensory perception and questions our sensory relationship with that which is real in order to inquire into our capability of knowledge. The only way out for Descartes is to trust thought and logic. In that sense, the Cartesian “cogito ergo sum” shows a way to overcome the *virtuality of reality* by which the difference between the virtual and the real becomes nested in the following

⁴⁴² Renée Descartes, *Discourse on Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason and Seeking the Truth in the Sciences*, Part 4, §1

sense: we cannot distinguish anymore whether reality is 'real' or virtual (dream).

With the term *virtuality of reality* I allude to a dominant postmodern idea, questioning whether we can at all distinguish between reality and fiction influenced by the omnipresence of *mediated reality*. Mediated reality presents fiction and non-fiction with the same kind of language; film is one of the most striking examples, together with the cyberspace. Reality and fiction are here entangled in a labyrinth where the truth of reality has a withdrawing nature, seeming more and more indistinguishable from fictional content to us. The term *virtuality of reality* is then based on a notion of the fictional as virtual, as known in the context of the so-called virtual worlds, designating the computer generated, fictional realities. In these contemporary, computer simulated realities we make use of the mental mechanism described by Descartes: our mind is making the virtual worlds actual for us.

The virtual hereby designates that which does *not* belong to reality, is thus fictional, although displaying qualities of what we perceive as sensible reality, relying on an artificial stimulation of our sensory perception. The *virtuality of reality* is a skeptical hypothesis since it is asking whether this kind of sensory perception is not part of the nature of reality, i.e. by assuming that reality feels the same way as virtuality. Is reality not itself a virtuality? If we stop demonizing virtuality as something bad, an illusion or deception, which ultimately could be controlled by an evil demon, as Descartes notoriously argues, the dichotomy between the virtual and the real does not make sense. This also applies to the dichotomies between unreal and real, interior and exterior etc.

However, could we not assume about film that which Descartes claims of dreams, that they are so real we cannot distinguish them from sensible reality? It would mean: I cannot be sure whether I am in a film or in real life, but I can know that my thoughts are true in both states, and so on. I will argue that, regarding film, such an assumption does not apply. In spite of certain currents of film theory arguing in that direction, my claim is that film is different from dreams. Film is not an internal stream of consciousness deceiving our senses. Film is displaced reality, a continuation of reality with audiovisual means and processed

by the mind as such. *Being-in-film* does not mean *being-in-dream*, as well as *being-on-Solaris*, does not mean *being-in-dream*. Rather, regarding the model of multiple reality we have designed so far, film is intra-actively entangled with the whole of reality it belongs to.

I will then try to apply an argumentation of diffraction on film, instead of Cartesian reflection, fitting our scope of analysis so far. Watching a movie does not make me question the reliability of my perception of reality, it is rather that the nature of reality is at stake: reality discloses a multiple character through film and we are facing not illusion but truth, a part of the real of reality or just a void. Dasein's *being-in-film* is shaping reality as just one more possibility out of an infinity of films, and this thereby changes our view on what we thought reality was like. For Descartes' chain of argumentation (if we could rewrite it in our sense) this could mean the following: Life could be other, because the similitude of the experience of life and dream creates a multiple potential of *possibilities of reality* – exactly because of the virtuality of reality. Reality and dream would not be oppositions any more, instead reality could become a possibility of dream, or of virtuality. Put in other words and as a preliminary conclusion: through the experience of dreams or of the virtual, *reality becomes a possibility of the virtual, which is not opposed to reality, but which is the real, because it implies all the possibilities of reality*. Such a thinking leads us to the inversion of the term virtuality of reality and through this into the Bergsonian-Deleuzian universe of the "reality of the virtual"⁴⁴³.

⁴⁴³ Compare to Keith Ansell Pearson, "The Reality of the Virtual: Bergson and Deleuze", in: *MLN*, Vol. 120, No. 5, *Comparative Literature Issue*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 2005

2. The Reality of the Virtual

Deleuze does not oppose the virtual to the real; instead he opposes the virtual to the actual and the real to the possible. For Deleuze the virtual, rather than aiming its realization, is fully real and aims for actualization. "What we call virtual is not something that lacks reality but something that is engaged in a process of actualization following the plane that gives it its particular reality."⁴⁴⁴ Thereby both, the virtual and its actualizations, belong to the plane of immanence. The term "reality of the virtual" is then picked up by Slavoj Žižek as he reverts the hypothesis of the "virtual reality" (of computer generated worlds) into the "reality of the virtual":

Today, everybody is talking about virtual reality but I think, (...) crucial to understand what goes on today, is the opposite: not virtual reality, but the reality of the virtual. That is to say: reality - by this I mean efficacy, effectiveness, real effects - produced, generated, by something, which does not yet fully exist; which is not yet fully actual.⁴⁴⁵

Žižek indeed takes the idea of reality of the virtual directly from Deleuze, whom he calls the philosopher of "the Virtual" and assumes that:

(T)he first reaction to it should be to oppose Deleuze's notion of the Virtual to the all-pervasive topic of virtual reality: what matters to Deleuze is not virtual reality, but the reality of the virtual (which, in Lacanian terms, is the Real). (...) The reality of the Virtual (...) stands for the reality of the Virtual as such, for its real effects and consequences.⁴⁴⁶

In his filmed interview with Ben Wright, Žižek describes this reality of the virtual as isomorphic to the Lacanian triad of the Real - imaginary real, symbolic real and "real" real - becoming in this specific context an imaginary virtual,

⁴⁴⁴ Gilles Deleuze, "Immanence: A Life", in: *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, p. 31

⁴⁴⁵ Ben Wright, *The reality of the virtual*, filmed interview with Slavoj Žižek (available online)

⁴⁴⁶ Slavoj Žižek, *Organs Without Bodies*, p.3

symbolic virtual and a real virtual. The three are interwoven with each other, meaning for Žižek that the entire triad is reflected into each of its elements⁴⁴⁷. In *Organs Without Bodies* as well as in the filmed interview Žižek gives an example for the “real real” of the *virtual real* taken from mathematics. He is describing the virtual real as a shape, which does not exist in itself:

Let us take an attractor in mathematics: all positive lines or points in its sphere of attraction only approach it in an endless fashion, never reaching its form - the existence of this form is purely virtual, being nothing more than the shape towards which lines and points tend. However, precisely as such, the virtual is the Real of this field: the immovable focal point around which all elements circulate.⁴⁴⁸

Might this not be what we have been searching for in order to describe that which is transferred in film (and photography) *from the thing to its reproduction*? It is there, yet it, although virtually real, does not exist in itself. It has not yet become fully actual, but it does as soon as the film is screened. The attractor thereby is the real, which exists in the sense that it is being approached by infinite possibilities of images. But is that the “real real”, the one withdrawing from symbolization? Žižek quickly turns to quantum physics and evokes the example of light, describing a hypothesis, which strikingly resembles the *white hole of the whole of all possible images* we have outlined before, if we substitute, in the Deleuzian sense, the ‘possible images’ with ‘virtual images’.

Žižek says:

Perhaps, the ontological difference between the Virtual and the Actual is best captured by the shift in the way quantum physics conceives of the relationship between particles and their interactions (...). This brings us to the constitutive ambiguity of the relationship between actual and virtual: (1) the human eye reduces the perception of light; it actualizes light in a certain way

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ Slavoj Žižek, *Organs Without Bodies*, p.3

(perceiving certain colors, etc.), a rose in a different way, a bat in a different way... The flow of light "in itself" is nothing actual, but, rather, the pure virtuality of infinite possibilities actualized in a multitude of ways; (2) on the other hand, the human eye expands perception - it inscribes what it "really sees" into the intricate network of memories and anticipations (like Proust with the taste of madeleine), it can develop new perceptions, and so forth. (...) It is the infinite potential field of virtualities out of which reality is actualized.⁴⁴⁹

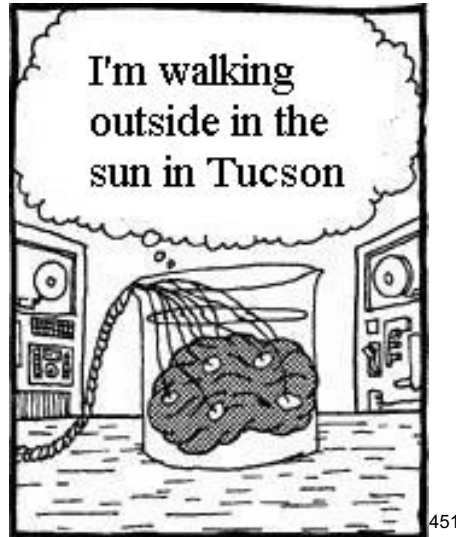
Moreover Žižek claims, at another point of his work, that reality is supplemented with fiction, an idea I will elucidate further. But before immersing into Žižekian philosophy and drawing its meaning for the solaristic system, let me take a break and step back to the Cartesian skepticism and its contemporary applications. In what follows I want to ask the question if the model of "Solaris" could not be the one of a virtual computer simulation, that is a virtual reality – which after all could provide new clues on the virtuality of the real.

3. "Solaris" as a *Simulation Hypothesis*

Regardless of our questioning, the Platonic as well as the Cartesian discussion about human access to reliable knowledge of reality has coined a philosophical tradition, which has found its modern adaptation in the *brains-in-a-vat hypothesis*⁴⁵⁰ designating the following situation: a conscious brain lies in a vat and a computer is generating neuro-stimulations, in such an elaborate way, that the brain thinks it is living in a world, where it does all kind of things, when in truth, it is lying in a nutritive liquid and connected to a machine.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 4

⁴⁵⁰ Hillary Putnam, "Brains in a Vat", in: *Reason, Truth and History*, pp. 1-21



This dystopia resembles Plato's cave and is most elegantly transformed into cinema by Lana and Andy Wachowski with their "Matrix trilogy", where people think they live in "the real world", yet in truth their minds are imprisoned by a computer simulation called *the matrix*, and controlled by evil machines. Of course, these machines bring to mind Descartes hypothesis of the existence of an evil demon, who misleads the mind by creating the illusion of an external world, including a body and even other minds. Dissatisfyingly enough, the only way out Descartes charts is his argument for the existence of a benevolent god. His undeniable existence Descartes believes to prove in a chain of argumentation afterwards criticized as circular (the so-called Cartesian circle).

The first part of the "Matrix-trilogy" (1999) had a thrilling cognitive impact: a futuristic philosophical tale assuming the apparently irrefutable philosophical hypothesis⁴⁵² that we could be living in a very sophisticated computer simulation, was received and discussed by a worldwide mass public. The recent rapid development of the internet and first steps in the computer simulated stimulation of our nervous system, seemed to increase the realism of such hypothesis presented as a dystopia for humanity. In consequence the film

⁴⁵¹ David Chalmers, "The Matrix as Metaphysics", in: *Philosophers Explore the Matrix*; available online

⁴⁵² David Chalmers develops this claim, which he calls "The Matrix Hypothesis". See: Ibid.

had a wide range of philosophical papers analyzing its multi-layered philosophical potential and discussing the nature of reality.

Two years before Chalmers' "Matrix hypothesis" Nick Bostrom came up with his "simulation hypothesis", which is part of a threefold "simulation argument"⁴⁵³. Although it is related, the simulation argument differs from the aforementioned discussions of skepticism (doubting that we are not dreaming, that we are not a brain in a vat, that we are not in Plato's Cave, that we are not living in a film, etc...). The simulation argument is indeed more interesting for our scope of analysis, since it does not proceed from a position of doubt. Instead we can rely on our empirical experience, scientific explanation and models of thought, assuming that we have computers in the external world, which are evolving at an astonishing velocity. So for Bostrom (who actually is the Director of the Future Humanity Centre at the University of Oxford) the enquiry goes into the future development of these computers in some future civilization, characterized as "posthuman" and "technologically mature": "what kind of technological capability would eventually be available?"⁴⁵⁴

This question is also linked to our previous chapter on the planet Solaris as a posthuman organic machine, similar to an all-encompassing, universal or total brain, which is intra-actively sensing the humans. Yet we have not been considering the following hypothesis, which now comes to our mind in light of Bostrom's simulation hypothesis: what if the whole trip of Kris Kelvin to Solaris, is not just a trip to another planet, but to a world which is entirely simulated by the solaristic brain, which could exactly have emerged from such a future posthuman civilization, following the rules of a superintelligent entity. Kris Kelvin then is reduced to a brain, which somehow connects with his own brain and therefore artificially simulates the visitors and the earthlike island of memory at the ending. That would be then the reason for the intra-activity and retro-activity of time.

⁴⁵³ Nick Bostrom, „Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?“, in: *The Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. 53, No. 211, pp. 243-255; available online in pdf format pp. 1-14

⁴⁵⁴ Nick Bostrom, *The Simulation Argument*, video-interview at the Future of Humanity Institute Oxford University; available online

To enrich this line of thought, let me add some further information on Bostrom's simulation argument. Its threefold structure is very simple to sum up, as Bostrom does in a couple of sentences in his conclusion:

A technologically mature "posthuman" civilization would have enormous computing power. Based on this empirical fact, the simulation argument shows that at least one of the following propositions is true: (1) The fraction of human-level civilizations that reach a posthuman stage is very close to zero; (2) The fraction of posthuman civilizations that are interested in running ancestor-simulations is very close to zero; (3) The fraction of all people with our kind of experiences that are living in a simulation is very close to one. If (1) is true, then we will almost certainly go extinct before reaching posthumanity. If (2) is true, then there must be a strong convergence among the courses of advanced civilizations so that virtually none contains any relatively wealthy individuals who desire to run ancestor-simulations and are free to do so. If (3) is true, then we almost certainly live in a simulation. In the dark forest of our current ignorance, it seems sensible to apportion one's credence roughly evenly between (1), (2), and (3). Unless we are now living in a simulation, our descendants will almost certainly never run an ancestor-simulation.⁴⁵⁵

Bostrom's paper in fact does carefully introduce and explain each of the three hypotheses, from which the third one is the most interesting for our context. In the case of "Solaris" the possibility (1) seems already refuted as "not true" (the planet is in a posthuman stage of super-intelligent, techno-organic development). Also (2) seems not to be true: the planet is apparently interested in creating ancestor simulations, the case (3). It has to be mentioned in our context that this kind of simulation would have to be a re-creation of the world, similar to the idealization of Bazin's myth of total cinema. On the planet, Kris is immersed into the solaristic simulation of reality, comparable to such a computer simulation. Alternatively, the Solaris station could be a computer simulated world and the planet the simulation's control center.

⁴⁵⁵ Nick Bostrom, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?", p. 14

Bostrom even refers to the hypothesis of a selective computer simulation, which actually would fit the situation we find in film and on *Solaris* very well. These selective simulations “include only a small group of humans or a single individual. The rest of humanity would then be zombies or ‘shadow people’ – humans simulated only at a level sufficient for the fully simulated people not to notice anything suspicious.”⁴⁵⁶ This description makes the selective simulations comparable to film, where a certain reality is designed in order to focus on a certain story. In “*Solaris*”, on the space station, only a very few people are left, on which the story is build.

Furthermore, by applying the idea of selective simulations to the situation designed in the movie “*Solaris*”, we could come to the following conclusion: that the life on Earth, which we get to know in the first part of the movie, is an ancestor computer simulation within another computer simulation, which is the solaristic space station, run by the solaristic posthuman superintelligence. This hypothesis in fact resembles Bostrom’s paper: “It may be possible for simulated civilizations to become posthuman. They may run their own ancestor-simulations on powerful computers they build in their simulated universe.”⁴⁵⁷

What we are seeing in the film could be such a case of a simulation inside a simulation. *Solaris* aims at measuring the experience in an ancestor computer simulation (Earth), and is therefore making Kelvin change the level of simulated reality: he transfers from simulated Earth into the simulated spaceship; thus he is repeating a selective simulation on the upper level (*Solaris* Space Station). That would mean that the Space Station had only be designed to upload Kelvin. In fact, somehow the situation between Kris and Harey cruelly resembles the one of mice in a laboratory, which they cannot leave. “I have the feeling that we are being fooled”, says Harey during one of the bedroom conversations, when she is asking Kris to tell her the truth about her identity.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 13

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 11

It is worth asking how Kelvin actually arrives on Solaris. The passage from Earth to space is in fact not perceived by Kelvin as a flight. “When am I leaving?” he is asking, and the answer is: “you already have”. We then see Kelvin being turned around, at least his head covered by a helmet, and then he faints. The scene is ambiguous: it might be not a space passage but an uploading of Kelvin’s mind (including its conscious as well as unconscious level) we are viewing. As soon as Kelvin is conscious, some of the formerly experienced simulation elements are repeated in order to study psychic, emotional and cognitive response, changing physical laws, etc. because “the posthumans running a simulation are like gods in relation to the people inhabiting the simulation”⁴⁵⁸ argues Bostrom. They are “omnipotent” and “omniscient”, they can change whatever they want and display on the monitors all the necessary information about the inhabitants they would need.

The movie also closes with a selective simulation: Kris has maybe been transferred into another simulation, which is this time earthlike, but with inverted physical laws: it is raining inside his father’s house and the fact that the father does not notice the raining of steaming water as something disturbing makes us suspect whether he is not a solaristic simulation, like Harey. Yet Kris does not distinguish between the identity of a true human being and a simulated one. For him the emotional experience makes these simulations real.

This situation is like the one of a filmmaker. Tarkovsky would be then the superintelligent posthuman entity, who has set up a nesting of multiple simulations, as multifold as the character of reality becomes: “Reality must thus contain many levels”⁴⁵⁹, says Bostrom. What we have refused before with Descartes, to doubt whether we are in a virtual (dreaming) experience, or in a real one, finds now its most intriguing application: the model of computer-generated, nested simulations (onion structure) seems like a film within a film.... This idea turns the hypothesis (3) of Bostrom’s argument the most powerful: “If we do go on to create our own ancestor-simulations, this

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 12

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 12

would be strong evidence against (1) and (2), and we would therefore have to conclude that we live in a simulation.”⁴⁶⁰ In this sense, the film is telling us that we are living in a reality which is simulated by a superintelligent posthuman structure.

Yet what would be the consequences of assuming that we live in such a computer simulation? Bostrom stresses that such a knowledge would affect our daily life or ambitions in terms of treating the simulators as responsible for laws. The comparison with a god-controlled reality becomes evident:

(I)f nobody can be sure that they are at the basement-level [of reality], then everybody would have to consider the possibility that their actions will be rewarded or punished, based perhaps on moral criteria, by their simulators. An afterlife would be a real possibility. Because of this fundamental uncertainty, even the basement civilization may have a reason to behave ethically. The fact that it has such a reason for moral behavior would of course add to everybody else’s reason for behaving morally, and so on, in truly virtuous circle. One might get a kind of universal ethical imperative, which it would be in everybody’s self-interest to obey, as it were “from nowhere”.⁴⁶¹

In a similar way the scientists in the space station do worry and speculate about the intentions of the planet Solaris and their behavior is influenced by what might be the reason for them facing simulated human beings. For example, Kris speculates about the reason they are there:

Until today, humanity, Earth were simply beyond love. Do you understand what I mean, Snaut? There are so few of us! Just a few billions – a mere handful! Perhaps we are here to feel, for the first time, people as a cause for love, eh?⁴⁶²

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 12

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., p. 12

⁴⁶² Andrei Tarkovsky, „Solaris“, in: *Collected Screenplays*, p. 179

However, the focus of Bostrom's argument does lie in the threefold structure and not in the guess whether (3) is the case or not. Therefore, for Bostrom, we even "may hope that (3) is true since that would decrease the probability of (1)"⁴⁶³, although the best hope may still be (2). Yet what could be the reasons for (2) to happen? Why would such a posthuman and technologically mature civilization lose interest in setting an ancestor simulation? The point is that they would very likely be different from humans and that the ancestor simulation is a human fantasy.

The solaristic brain, covered by an ocean, is an unknown superintelligent entity, yet it is not human. This could be the precise reason for a solaristic brain to create the simulation of a space station or even of earthlike islands, to get to know and measure what human is. Therefore, it is creating the space station as a situation in which a few scientists are confronted with their past and emotions. This confrontation raises a deep conflict between science, which is helpless in its attempts to explain the planet Solaris, and human moral values like truth and love. Harey keeps insisting that she is becoming human and that it is an unhuman situation they are all in.

Actually, under this unhuman pressure (exercised by the solaristic brain), suddenly the truly human prevails. In saying so, a further question remains implicit: which kind of knowledge can the non-human superintelligence take from the humans? What would be its research aim, which kind of knowledge of reality and human cognitive capability would it like to obtain? As Tarkovsky (who runs the "Solaris"-simulation) says: "My function is to make whoever sees my films aware of his need to love and to give his love."⁴⁶⁴ But love can be used precisely as a way to approach that which we cannot know.

⁴⁶³ Nick Bostrom, *op. cit.*, p. 13

⁴⁶⁴ Andrei Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 200

4. On Solaristic Love and Subjective Knowledge

In chapter XV I will focus on Graham Harman's object oriented ontology, yet let me do a short preview of some of his concepts here, since it fits our context. For Harman objects always have a dimension of their own, a kind of depth remaining inaccessible for the human perspective. Thereby he defines objects as every thing there is: living entities and non-living ones. Further the determination of object "must include those entities that are neither physical nor even real. Along with diamonds, rope, and neutrons, objects may include armies, monsters, square circles, and leagues of real and fictitious nations."⁴⁶⁵

In a small essay Harman explains this central idea of the inaccessibility of the real object and introduces the *third table* as an example for the real table, lying beyond the grasp of science as well as beyond the "humanist" view⁴⁶⁶. The third table exists independently from us, I may never know as it really is. Harman refers in this context to *love* as a philosophical principle of indirect access to the knowledge of the real:

By locating the third table (and to repeat, this the only *real* table) in a space between the 'table' as particles and the 'table' in its effects on humans, I have apparently found a table that can be verified in no way at all, whether by science or by tangible effects in the human sphere. Yes –and this is precisely the point. Any philosophy is unworthy of the name if it attempts to convert objects into the conditions by which they can be known or verified. The term *philosophia*, possibly coined by Pythagoras, famously means not 'wisdom' but 'love of wisdom'. The real is something that cannot be known, only loved. This does not mean that access to the table is impossible, only that it must be *indirect*.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶⁵ Graham Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, p. 5

⁴⁶⁶ "The scientist reduces the table downward to tiny particles invisible to the eye; the humanist reduces it upward to a series of effects on people and other things. [...] The real table is in fact a third table lying between these two others. [...]" (Cf. Graham Harman, *The Third Table*, p. 7)

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 11

'*What cannot be known can be loved*' is an idea that matches with the storyline of the movie "Solaris" and is therefore to be designated as an *allusional principle* of solaristic philosophy. "Solaris" questions the epistemological limits of science, its incapacity to grasp and to deal with that which is *real*. The movie inquires into existential issues like death, love, existence, conscience or nature, juxtaposing imagination and actuality, emotion and reason in order to reflect on what is really going on: the planet withdraws and human existence somehow changes rules.

Emotions reveal the hidden perspective of things, and how an understanding of that which is real becomes graspable even without intelligible knowing. This proposal of Harman *not to understand the real but to love it* is exactly the kind of thinking that permits fusion between the humans and the planet in "Solaris". The Solaris-brain has chosen an emotional way of discerning and comprehending the humans: the visitor Harey loves Kelvin from the first instant although he needs a further step to simply embrace this love, instead of searching for an intelligible explanation for her existence. Harey and Kelvin do not understand each other, but they love each other, grasp the other by intuition. In a climactic monologue, when Kelvin's fever starts and he is wandering down the corridor, he speaks about the power of love withdrawing from explanation: "Well then, I love you... But love is a feeling you can experience, but never explain."⁴⁶⁸ This reflects our relation to the real as Harman describes it and adds the subjective experience as a key; simultaneously love closes the *gap* between object and subject, an idea, which I will further explain in what follows.

Mary Hesse (who is frequently quoted by Paul Ricoeur in *La Métaphore Vive*) depicts the Kantian-Hegelian premise of subject-object opposition as attached to a presupposed idea of objective reality opposing the subject⁴⁶⁹. The knowing subject is thus separated from the natural reality and

⁴⁶⁸ Andrei Tarkovsky, „Solaris“, in: *Collected Screenplays*, p. 179

⁴⁶⁹ "In a philosophical tradition deriving from Kant and Hegel, this reality has been expressed in terms of the, separation of subject and object' and the consequent ,objectification' of the natural word." (Cf. Mary Hesse, *The Construction of Reality*, p. 159)

"supposed to 'reflect' the world in knowledge"⁴⁷⁰ when in fact, according to Hesse, the way we grasp reality in form of knowledge depends on a *construction*, shaped by our applied model of analysis: "Scientific theory provides constructed models of scientific reality that are distinguished from other types of social and poetic construction by being constrained by feedback loops involving experimentation in the natural world."⁴⁷¹ Hesse further describes our relationship with the world as *subjectively interactive* and assumes knowledge, just as Barad, not as a reflective description of the world (which she refuses), but, and here Hesse strikingly differs from Barad, as a mental projection *on* the world:

There is an essential interaction between the knowing subject and the world, both in terms of linguistic categories brought to the world in describing it, and in the activity of the subject in physical relations with the world, [...]. If this is how the subject is in the world, then the attempt to represent the world in knowledge as a neutral independent object is not like a mirror image; rather, it is a projection on the world of a mental model whose framework is given by the schemas of kinesthetic activity and by the categories of language.⁴⁷²

Hesse thus delineates an open concept of reality oscillating between inside and outside, interceding at the gap between subject and object, complementing the world interactively by a pre-defined model of explanation. Although her claim is not based on diffraction, she refuses representationalism and mentions something which resembles Žižek's claim that the "human eye EXPANDS perception"⁴⁷³, because "it inscribes what it 'really sees' into the intricate network of memories and anticipations (like Proust with the taste of madeleines), it can develop new perceptions, and so forth."⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 158

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., p. 159

⁴⁷² Ibid., p. 159

⁴⁷³ Slavoj Žižek, *op. cit.*, p.4

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., p.4

The Bergsonian side of what Žižek formulates, and which we have not been mentioning yet, has to be emphasized here. *Memory* is a key-concept in Bergson; it induces time as the *subjective side of knowledge*, in the following sense: according to Bergson time is duration, *la durée* in French. It does not designate the mathematical, spatial time of science, but rather describes an individual, contracted time, where past, present and future are not separated, but coexist; duration, similar to that which we have considered as the “totality of matter” (all interaction of all elements) is for Bergson a concept of *qualitative plurality* – of moments.⁴⁷⁵ Memory is thereby an aggregate of imprinted *memory images* and enables us to comprehend a “subjective side of knowledge” – a kind of “contraction of the real”.⁴⁷⁶ This definition of an image as a temporal slice able to contract a plurality is quite close to our definition of an infinite real image, the one cinema conveys, and which is distinct from perception, although the latter is a part of it:

As I shall endeavor to show, even the ‘subjectivity’ of sensible qualities consists above all else in a kind of contraction of the real, affected by our memory. In short, memory in these two forms, covering as it does with a cloak of recollections a core of immediate perception, and also contracting a number of external moments into a single internal moment, constitutes the principal share of individual consciousness in perception, the subjective side of the knowledge of things.⁴⁷⁷

This is how we then select only some images in order to be able to see something: by interacting constantly with our past, combining inside and outside.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁵ “However brief I suppose any perception to be, it always occupies a certain duration, and involves consequently an effort of memory which prolongs one into another a plurality of moments.” (Cf. Henri Bergson, “The Choice of Images”, in: *op. cit.*, p. 25)

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25

⁴⁷⁸ In *Film Theory*, Hugo Münsterberg refers to perception being drawn by subjective attention: “I recognized that, in every case, the objective world of outer events had been shaped and molded until it became adjusted to the subjective movements of the mind. The

At a later point of his work Žižek has deepened his claim that the “human eye expands perception”⁴⁷⁹. It is an idea, which includes subjectivity in the way we attain knowledge. Žižek’s next step consists in assuming subjectivity as an incompleteness, and as such a part of totality, yet an incomplete one. Therefore, Žižek sets subjectivity as a form to approach the Absolute, a term he takes from German idealism (relying mostly on Fichte and Hegel). Remarkably he compares his position with the one of Heideggerian correlationism:

(...) incompleteness [is] already in itself a mode of subjectivity, such that subjectivity is always already part of the Absolute, and reality is not even thinkable without subjectivity (as in Heidegger, where there is no Sein without Da-Sein as its locality) (...).⁴⁸⁰

As I have tried to show before, Heidegger approaches the puzzling question of being by examining the ontological and epistemological conditions of Dasein. For Heidegger Dasein is the only possible perspective to analyze being and to try to grasp being as a whole. The existence of the visitors in “Solaris” shifts this question into an even more complex one. Since Harey claims her subjectivity as part of the truth of her existence, it still is a doubled subjectivity we are confronted with: how can we truly know an existence or presence of an entity, which is obviously the projection of the subjectivity of another entity?

mind develops memory ideas and imaginative ideas; in the moving pictures they become reality.” (Cf. Hugo Münsterberg, *Hugo Münsterberg on Film*, p.110)

⁴⁷⁹ Slavoj Žižek, *op. cit.*, p. 4

⁴⁸⁰ Slavoj Žižek, *Less Than Nothing*, p. 905

5. The *Nothing* as an Open Concept of Reality

In “Solaris” the conceptual persona Harey induces a way of thinking that *integrates* subjectivity in the search for truth, clearly challenging science and the dominant idea of objective scientific knowledge. Therefore, the film “Solaris” is to be seen as a critique of an absolute belief in modern science, opposing scientific knowledge with intuitive truth and cognition, intelligible for the kind of thought, which is located in the realm of diffraction. Such a critique clearly sets a difference between knowledge and thought.

In his lecture “What is Metaphysics?” Heidegger questions scientific logic as the dominant instrument for the search of truth: he evinces the limits by defining the term “Das Nichts” - “the nothing”. The nothing is hereby introduced as a concept, which science cannot grasp or understand in theory: because nothing can never *be*. Rather the nothing is for Heidegger active, it is in action, it “nihilates”⁴⁸¹, and it does so incessantly, although in a hidden way. We normally have no awareness of this permanent action of the Nothing. Anxiety - which we already have emphasized as the philosophical mood to grasp being as a whole – reveals the nothing as well:

The nothing reveals itself in anxiety — but not as a being. Just as little is it given as an object. Anxiety is no kind of grasping of the nothing. All the same, the nothing reveals itself in and through anxiety, although, to repeat, not in such a way that the nothing becomes manifest in our malaise quite apart from beings as a whole.⁴⁸²

For Heidegger, the question about the nothing also determines our understanding of being. Heidegger concludes his essay with the “fundamental question of metaphysics which the Nothing itself produces: Why are there

⁴⁸¹ *Nichten* is in German a verb invented by Heidegger to attribute an activity to the Nothing: “das Nichts nichtet” – “the Nothing itself nihilates”, literally to be translated as “the Nothing nothings”.

⁴⁸² Martin Heidegger, What is Metaphysics?, § 28; available online

beings at all, and why not rather nothing?" ⁴⁸³ This question seems to be a solaristic one: why are there visitors at all?

As we have learned throughout this treatise, Alain Badiou, designates a "void" as a kind of *omnipresent nothing*, which corresponds to the definition of the Lacanian Real. The Real for Lacan is a void (comparable to the Heideggerian nothing, as I claim) because it is impossible to think: a nothing retrieving and escaping, when I try to grasp it; yet it is acting in-between - us and the world. It is making reality open for projection, the possibilities of Dasein. This is a thought Žižek would complete: "Reality is less than Nothing. That is why reality has to be supplemented by fiction: to conceal its emptiness."⁴⁸⁴ I will pick-up this last implication: *open for projection* or *supplemented by fiction*.

The existence of the visitors on Solaris evokes the Kantian "gap" (between object and subject as Žižek designates it), but in a reverse perspective: how can I reliably measure an existence or presence of being [*Dasein* in German] which is obviously the external prolongation of our own subjectivity? Žižek underlines that the major problem would be to "think the subjective perception as anchored in reality" ⁴⁸⁵ – the same challenge Heidegger faces when he tries to grasp being – and a principle, which fits the solaristic system. Žižek mentions hereby, as a possible way out, a hypothesis formulated by Adrian Johnston (inscribing the line of thought into the overcoming of correlationism formulated by Meillassoux) that:

All reality is transcendently constituted, 'correlative' to a subjective position, and to push this through to the end, the way out of this 'correlationist' circle is not to try to directly reach the In-itself, but to inscribe this transcendental correlation into the Thing-In-itself and for us. ⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸³ "Die Grundfrage der Metaphysik, die das Nichts selbst erzeugt: Warum ist überhaupt Seiendes und nicht vielmehr Nichts?" (Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Was ist Metaphysik?*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M., 2007, p. 27; translation mine – C.R.)

⁴⁸⁴ Slavoj Žižek, *op. cit.*, p. 4

⁴⁸⁵ Slavoj Žižek, "The ontology of quantum physics and transcendental materialism", in: *ibid.*, p. 905

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 906

It is thus the proposal to reconsider the subjective gap as a part of the absolute, as we have seen: that which is incomplete tends towards completion. Žižek further asks then about the possible structural relation between the subjective and the Real:

Like thought, the subject (Self) is also immaterial: its One-ness, its self-identity, is not reducible to its material support. I am precisely not my body: the Self can only arise against the background of the death of its substantial being, of what it is “objectively.” So, again, how can one explain the rise of subjectivity out of the “incomplete” ontology, how are these two dimensions (the abyss/void of subjectivity, the incompleteness of reality) to be thought together? I should apply here something like a weak anthropic principle: how should the Real be structured so that it allows for the emergence of subjectivity (in its autonomous efficacy, not as a mere “user’s illusion”)?⁴⁸⁷

What Žižek formulates here as a question might be symptomatic in the solaristic system. In “Solaris” Harey struggles to be mortal – for her *Dasein* to become human, become a whole, reach completeness, and thereby aims at the “real” real, the “absolute” of her existence – paradoxically through death. And that which is questioned by the Solaris scientists is precisely her being, whether it is to be considered a *Dasein* or rather a void. To Heidegger, death gives *Dasein* a determination; it completes *Dasein* as a whole and is the ultimate realization of its potential. This seems a fusion of the very subjective – even Heidegger claims that we cannot share death - and the absolute, a completeness withdrawing from subjectivity. Žižek further asserts:

Far from indicating a radical externality resisting the subject, the thickness of objectivity resisting the subject’s grasp is precisely the *subjective* moment, the most elementary „reifying“ illusion of subjectivity, what the subject *adds* to the real-in-itself.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 905

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 807

Žižek claims here a real impossible to grasp for the subject, but that which is grasped, namely the materiality or “thickness of objectivity”, is exactly a “reifying illusion” added by the subject: the subject tries to grasp that which it adds and cannot do so. This fits exactly the idea of reification present in “Solaris”: “I do not want to get to know other worlds, I want mirrors” says Snout to Kelvin in the library. It also grasps the image as real, but this reality is always the real *plus* the subjectivity of the beholder.

In the movie “Solaris” the real (in form of the solaristic brain) further resists the attempts to be known, but it acts, it performs, it interacts and reveals itself in images and materializations, and this in a double sense: as a film projection and as a reality of its own. It is the *real of image* – image as an event or even accident in its singularity, the accident of visibility. The real of Solaris, which is active, generates matter *in reaction to the humans*. The visitors and - as the *ending of the film* shows - even other islands of memory physically emerge.

I will argue that such an *open concept of reality* – whether constructed or supplemented by fiction - is a *cinematographic condition* sustained by the desire to escape into another reality, to die, or to enter a film, just as we have argued in chapter XII. CP Harey is the embodiment of this projection principle. Just as a film-projection, she is the *positivity of the negative*, reflected reality, *more* than material. As we have seen, Heideggerian thought directly relates projection (*Entwurf*) with the possibilities of Dasein: there is always something still outstanding in our existence, namely the possibilities yet to come. This raises a question of projection as a way to process the future, to transform it from the Aristotelian negativity of the now directly into being.

The premise of ‘projection of reality’ as a *cinematographic principle*, as claimed before, enables a transformation of Heidegger’s *being-in-the-world*, which entails a multiplicity of possibilities for Dasein, into a *being-in-film* – itself containing an infinity of possibilities. It is then the engagement with an arche-principle of projection, which is cinematographic in its praxis, yet “ontokinetic” in its nature. This term “ontokinetic” is raised by Peter Sloterdijk, who proposes the concept by reassessing Heidegger’s thrownness into the world: Dasein is

thrown into a *movement*⁴⁸⁹, the one of the world, and which we substitute with film, the movement of film: the world turns around, just as life, just as a movie does.

Like Deleuze we must *believe* in projections (cinema) in order to close the gap (of *nothingness*) between us and the world, and in order to keep on going – to process the future again and again. The aim is the escape from the constant incompleteness of the world; an incompleteness confronting *Nichtung* – nihilation, the Heideggerian *nothing in action*, revealed in anxiety just like “Dasein’s primordial totality of Being”⁴⁹⁰. Projection is needed for Dasein to escape nihilation as it is needed to escape death. The confrontation with such nihilation is to be compared with the constant incompleteness of the world, which we desire to be complete.

The *world-as-a-whole* would be then a mix of world-projection and world-perception. In Heidegger’s philosophy this necessity of *completion* or even *conclusion* corresponds, as we have seen, to the impulse of death as well as to the search of knowledge: because in death we complete all that has been. Death is the utmost possibility of projection, the permanently still outstanding, which at the same time is as real as nothing. Heidegger’s nothing – which is realized for Dasein in death – is the domain of the real, and as such a concluding claim of this chapter.

⁴⁸⁹ “Heidegger is the thinker of movement. His original idea or quasi his criminal act is the jump or the ‘Letting-yourself-go’ (Sichloslassen) into a condition, in which he finds in himself, and ‘under his feet’ nothing more than motion. For him, kinetics precedes logic, or, if you will tolerate the paradoxical turn: movement is its foundation.” (translation mine – C.R.) - “Heidegger ist der Denker der Bewegung. Sein Urgedanke oder quasi seine Tathandlung ist der Sprung oder das Sichloslassen in eine Befindlichkeit, bei der er in sich selbst und ‘unter seinen Füßen’ nichts anderes mehr findet als Bewegtheit. Bei ihm geht die Kinetik der Logik voraus, oder, wenn man die paradoxe Wendung dulden will: Die Bewegung ist sein Fundament.” (Cf. Peter Sloterdijk, in: *Nicht gerettet*, p. 29)

⁴⁹⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 227

PART 4

SOLARISTIC CONCLUSIONS -

THE LINKS

OF THE SOLARISTIC SYSTEM



XV.

RAISING A SOLARISTIC FOURFOLD

1. Point of Departure: Heidegger's Fourfold

Heidegger's fourfold – “Das Geviert” is part of his late work and is developed in the Bremen lectures “The thing” (1950) and “Building Dwelling Thinking” (1951). It basically describes the oneness of the world and things as consisting of four quadrants – named as Gods, Sky, Mortals and Earth. According to Harman, who relies in his object-oriented philosophy (commonly referred to as OOO – object oriented ontology, although Harman also speaks of object-oriented metaphysics⁴⁹¹) on Heidegger's fourfold as well as on Heidegger's tool analysis, the fourfold is frequently underestimated and often neglected within Heidegger's oeuvre, referred to as a vague concept or esoteric expression, too opaque to decrypt. In Harman's understanding the opposite is the case; for him the fourfold represents the kernel of Heidegger's philosophy: it completes the tool analysis, and has a special impact on the future of philosophy. These ideas of Harman function as a catalyst for the conclusions of the solaristic system and will be deepened throughout this chapter.

Thereby, since Heidegger's fourfold will be the basis for a solaristic fourfold to come, I have decided to quote a larger part of “The Thing” where he summarizes the fourfold in a quite poetic way:

⁴⁹¹ Graham Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, p. 48

Earth is the building bearer, nourishing with its fruits, tending water and rock, plant and animal. When we say earth, we are already thinking of the other three along with it, by way of the simple oneness of the four.

The sky is the sun's path, the course of the moon, the wandering glitter of the stars, the year's seasons, the light and dusk of day, the gloom and glow of night, the clemency and inclemency of the weather, the drifting clouds and blue depth of the ether.

When we say sky, we are already thinking of the other three along with it, by way of the simple oneness of the four.

The divinities are the beckoning messengers of the godhead. Out of the hidden sway of the divinities the god emerges as what he is, which removes him from any comparison with beings that are present. When we speak of the divinities, we are already thinking of the other three along with it, by way of the simple oneness of the four.

The mortals are the human beings. They are called mortals because they can die. To die means to be capable of death as death. Only man dies. The animal perishes. It has death neither ahead of itself nor behind it. Death is the shrine of Nothing, that is, of that which in every respect is never something that merely exists, but which nevertheless presences, even as the mystery of Being itself.

As the shrine of Nothing, death harbors within itself the presencing of Being. As the shrine of Nothing, death is the shelter of Being. We now call mortals mortals – not because their earthly life comes to an end, but because they are capable of death as death. Mortals are who they are, as mortals, present in the shelter of Being. They are presencing relation to Being as Being.

Metaphysics, by contrast, thinks of man as *animal*, as a living being. Even when ratio pervades animalitas, man's being remains defined by life and life-experience. Rational living beings must first *become* mortals.

When we speak of mortals, we are already thinking of the other three along with it, by way of the simple oneness of the four.

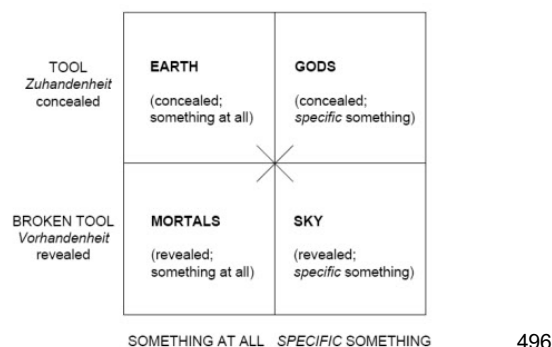
Earth and sky, divinities and mortals – being at one with one another of their own accord – belong together by way of the simpleness of the united fourfold. Each of the four mirrors in its own way the presence of the others.

This appropriating mirror-play of the simple onefold of earth and sky, divinities and mortals, we call the world. The world presences by worlding. That

means: the world's worlding cannot be explained by anything else nor can it be fathomed through anything else. (...) The united four are already strangled in their essential nature when we think of them only as separate realities, which are to be grounded in and explained by one another.⁴⁹²

The preservation of the fourfold's oneness comes as dwelling, the mode under which "mortals are in the fourfold"⁴⁹³: "In saving the earth, in receiving the sky, in awaiting the divinities, in initiating mortals, dwelling occurs as the fourfold preservation of the fourfold."⁴⁹⁴ We have seen before how the term *dwelling* is for Heidegger linked to the Greek *parousia* - being in the sense of "Anwesen", implying always its own "Abwesen" - decay and absence. In the "*thing-lecture*" Heidegger further underlines how the fourfold is present in the thing, which is *thinging*: the thing is fourfold in its thinging, which simultaneously is a *worlding*: the world's oneness is fourfold. The "union" of "the fourfold" is present in the experience of things: "If we let the thing be present in its thinging from out of the worlding world, then we are thinking of the thing as thing."⁴⁹⁵ To dwell is what mortals do under the sky and on Earth and simply means to let the fourfold be, to stay with things.

The Fourfold (*das Geviert*)



⁴⁹² Martin Heidegger, "The Thing", in: *Poetry, Language, Thought*, pp. 176 -178

⁴⁹³ Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking", in: *ibid.*, p. 148

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 149

⁴⁹⁵ Martin Heidegger, "The Thing", in: *ibid.*, p.178

⁴⁹⁶ Graham Harman, *Tool-Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects*, p. 203

Harman stresses that the fourfold does not refer to concrete entities, but consists in four poles. The important deduction for him from the fourfold thus is that reality is made of quadrants, of four poles in a constant duel, building bonds, tensions and interactions between themselves, although he laments the vagueness with which Heidegger describes them.

The fourfold is, in my understanding, to be read as a metaphor, an allusive approximation to the real, a term which plays a major role in Harman's object-oriented approach. Heidegger describes the fourfold as an interplay of relations and bonds, whereby each one mirrors the others:

Each of the four mirrors in its own way the presence of the others. Each therewith reflects itself in its own way into its own, within the simpleness of the four. This mirroring does not portray a likeness. The mirroring, lightening each of the four, appropriates their own presencing into simple belonging to one another. Mirroring in this appropriating-lightening way, each of the four plays to each of the others. The appropriative mirroring sets each of the four free into its own, but it binds these free ones into the simplicity of their essential being toward one another.⁴⁹⁷

Due of this interplay of the fourfold poles with and into each other, speaking about reality and about the real is very complex. What is furthermore of special relevance here is the fact that the thinking of the world is presupposed, but can never grasp the fourfold as such – which would be the world as a whole, the real or truth. “As soon as human cognition here calls for an explanation, it fails to transcend the world's nature, and falls short of it. The human will to explain just does not reach to the simpleness of the simple onefold of worlding.”⁴⁹⁸

The fourfold is experienced by the mortals in their mode of being as dwelling - in a state of caring and preserving the fourfold. Furthermore they try to *think* about the dwelling, whereby “thinking itself belongs to dwelling”⁴⁹⁹ in

⁴⁹⁷ Martin Heidegger, *op. cit.*, p. 177

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 177-178

⁴⁹⁹ Martin Heidegger, “Building Dwelling Thinking”, in: *ibid.*, p. 158

the following sense: “The real dwelling plight lies in this, that mortals ever search anew for the nature of dwelling, that they *must ever learn to dwell*.”⁵⁰⁰ Therefore, the fourfold is accessed indirectly by being as dwelling.

As we will see, Harman, in his fourfold proposal of OOO does appropriate the idea of four-poled structures in constant strife, yet redevelops the four poles. With his reflection on fourfold structures Harman intends to draw a way for philosophy into the future. Heidegger is for Harman the example for the ground of this approach, as he becomes more and more poetic with time. Harman says:

In the present day, Heidegger’s fourfold structure appears to be merely a quirky and arbitrary outgrowth of his late system. But imagine a scenario in which, two centuries from now, all ontologies are built of fourfold structures descended from his own. If that were to happen, then the status of the 1949 Bremen lectures would shift from ‘isolated and inexplicable oddity’ to ‘classic ancestral text of quadruple ontology’. The greatest compliment I can pay to our ancestors is not to imitate their words and gestures endlessly, but to turn them into the forerunners of something different.⁵⁰¹

In this sense I propose to think of a solaristic fourfold, also because Heidegger’s model seems to specially match the movie “Solaris”. We are dealing here with four poles quite identical to the ones Heidegger names: humans, visitors, earth and the planet, and it will be interesting to consider the philosopher’s musing on the mortals’ relation with death, presented as “the shrine of Nothing”. It is hereby worth to recall the comparison we have established between the Heideggerian Nothing and the Lacanian Real as a void. I will go deeper into this point at the end of this chapter. To lay out the solaristic system then does not mean to transpose Heidegger’s or Harman’s fourfold into our context, but it does mean that I will try to think about a solaristic fourfold based on a structure of four poles, taking insights from

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 158

⁵⁰¹ Graham Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, p.94

Heidegger (who already is the main reference of this analysis) as well as from Harman.

By doing so, I firstly propose a closer look on Harman's fourfold, which seems to present a consistent approach to the real of objects by introducing a completely new way to read Heidegger's tool analysis. While doing so, Harman is designating Heidegger a pioneer for the contemporary currents of realism.

2. Drawing the Idea of a Solaristic Fourfold

The idea of a solaristic fourfold consists in the attempt to appropriate Heidegger's fourfold into the solaristic system. At the same time this attempt preludes the conclusions of this analysis, which aim to outline the solaristic system. Based on a four-poled structure its tenets and concepts will be unfolded, deduced from what has been elaborated so far. In order to picture such a fourfold arrangement of relations in a sustained way, I will depart from Harman's reflection on fourfold structures. By relying on Heidegger's fourfold, Harman establishes a structure of four poles, interacting with each other in terms of "bonds" and "tensions".

Naturally it would exceed the scope of our analysis to do justice to all particular parts of Harman's object oriented philosophy. Yet before focusing in detail on those concepts, which it would make sense to integrate into our analysis, let me give a short summary of Harman's main positions.

Harman's approach takes its place in the framework of speculative realism. As we have seen so far, besides the rejection of correlationism (or the attempt to overcome it), another common denominator of speculative realism is to admit the existence of the real or of a domain of the real, *independent* from the human mind or presence (even if materialism integrates the human perspective into this domain of the real). Such a real exists

whether we can access or perceive it or not. Furthermore, human ability to perceive reality captures certain features of a whole spectrum of properties – but at least it captures properties *of reality*, and not properties the mind reads into reality. Harman apparently starts from a correlationist position, defining the domain of the real as sealed. Yet this position is then reformulated: the real is sealed, yet there are ways to access it indirectly, zones where the real becomes manifest. Harman tries to reassess the real by an object-based thinking: he defines reality as composed by objects. As we have mentioned, objects – whether elements, living beings like people or animals, inanimate things like tables or imaginary entities like demons or fictitious nations⁵⁰² - are all there is. In an online essay Harman further elaborates:

By ‘objects’ I mean unified realities – physical or otherwise – that cannot fully be reduced either downwards to their pieces or upwards to their effects. We know that human and inanimate bodies cannot exist without tiny physical subcomponents. Yet we also know that objects have a certain degree of robust reality that can withstand changes in those components. An object is emergent beyond its subcomponents, and cannot be explained exhaustively by its pieces alone.⁵⁰³

As I have mentioned before, Harman explains the core of his approach in a small essay in which he focuses on the inaccessibility of the real object and introduces as an example the *third table* (actually standing for the real table). This table lies beyond the grasp of science as well as beyond the “humanist” approach: “The real table is in fact a third table lying between these two others.”⁵⁰⁴ Furthermore, the third table exists *independently* from us, it lies “in a permanent autonomous zone, where objects are simply themselves”⁵⁰⁵.

⁵⁰² See: Graham Harman, *op. cit.*, p. 5

⁵⁰³ Graham Harman, “Art Without Relations”, in: *Artreview*, September 2014, available online

⁵⁰⁴ Graham Harman, *The Third Table*, pp. 6-7

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10

Yet by further immersing into his work, we discover that Harman's theory has a rather complex structure, as he actually distinguishes between sensual and real objects. An object, according to Harman, "has reality in the world" (real objects) or "only in the mind"⁵⁰⁶ (sensual objects). As I will explain later, this object-oriented theory relies on Heidegger's theory of tools and on Husserl's phenomenology. Real objects are "autonomous forces in the world"⁵⁰⁷ for Harman, whereas sensual objects need perceivers, therefore Harman also calls them "images": "Sensual objects exist only insofar as some perceiver is occupied with them. These perceivers need not to be human."⁵⁰⁸ The domain of the real he proposes is thereby characterized by withdrawal. We may never know reality as it really is, since "we have apparently found a table that can be verified in no way at all"⁵⁰⁹. Real objects are inaccessible, sealed, as well as deep: deeper than their appearance to the human mind, deeper than their relations to one another, deeper than any theoretical or sensual encounter with them. This "depth" of real objects is the core enquiry of Harman's ontology, which substantially differs from the materialist approach of Žižek's or Badiou's Lacanian Real (see footnote 510).

The most striking difference to such materialism is that Harman refers neither to a multiple nor to a void and is mostly interested in the relations between the four poles of the real and the sensual. These poles are real objects, real qualities, sensual objects and sensual qualities. From there on he establishes a network of ten possible bonds, dominated by four main tensions designated as *time*, *space*, *eidos* and *essence*. The solaristic transposition of Harman's fourfold which I propose to explore further is then centered on the difference between real images and sensual images, although Harman never mentions the idea of image other than as sensual (he actually calls the sensual objects *images*). Yet (as we will see) Harman's idea of 'essence', defined as the tension between real objects and real qualities, becomes most interesting for us and will be compared to the solaristic real of

⁵⁰⁶ Graham Harman, *Bells and Whistles*, p. 60

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 60

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 60

⁵⁰⁹ Graham Harman, *The Third Table*, p. 11

reality. In fact this 'essence' manifests a form of access to the withdrawing real, and the way it interacts.

3. Contextualizing Harman's Real Object in our Scope of Analysis

Within our scope of analysis the attempt to access the withdrawing real reflects, once more, what Cavell describes as the "unfathomable abyss" (see Chapter VIII of this analysis), which lies between the thing and its existence as a photographic image, comparable in our view to the Kantian gap between subject and object (a void in Žižek's approach, or the Real, which has to be supplemented by subjectivity or fiction⁵¹⁰). For Harman the Kantian opposition

⁵¹⁰ In spite of Harman's explicit dispraise towards the Žižekian line of transcendental materialism I compare Žižek and Harman here. Even if Žižek gives an apparently anti-realist line of argumentation, his enquiries aim to overcome correlationism, as I have tried to show. Harman further criticizes Žižek by quoting him as follows: "The true formula of materialism is not that there is some noumenal reality beyond our distorting perception of it. The only consistent materialist position is that *the world does not exist*... The notion of the world as a positive universe presupposes an external observer." (Slavoj Žižek in conversation with Glyn Daly (2004), quoted by Graham Harman in: *The Quadruple Object*, p. 61) 10 years later this very same argument, that the world does not exist because its existence would presuppose an external observer, is transformed by Markus Gabriel into a realist claim. As we have seen in chapter IX of this analysis, Gabriel is against "the idea that there is or ought to be a unified totality of what there is, whether you call it 'the world', 'being' or 'reality'." (Markus Gabriel, *Fields of Sense: A New Realist Ontology*, p. 5). Instead of a non-existing reality, for Gabriel there are "fields of sense", which do exist. I have further tried to show that Žižek aims to overcome the Kantian gap between subject and object by his claim that reality is less than nothing, to be supplemented by fiction, therefore he proposes to think subjectivity as being part of the absolute. Even so these are striking differences of approach, I believe that Harman's criticism of Žižek's theory reduces it to something like "we cannot think something without thinking it" (Graham Harman, *op. cit.*, p. 62), and should be ignored, because it is reductive and does no justice to a far more complex position.)

or gap constitutes a wrong question: to him there are innumerable relations between the sensual and the real objects, as they both pertain to a network. Therefore, for Harman, it is not that the abyss withdraws from our access, but that the real object withdraws. Even so, we could say that the abyss conveys the domain of the real in terms of relations.

Let us now come back to Heidegger's theme, which he also mentions when discussing the fourfold – that being implies thinking about being. We have argued so far that this necessity of knowing being as a whole is what brings us to the cinema, watching film. We have not mentioned yet that in this context Cavell too argues that the reason why we watch movies goes back to our desire for knowledge of the world as a whole, or to see reality as it really is. According to Cavell, this is of course an impossible perspective. His argumentation recalls indeed what we have mentioned before on Bazin's myth of total cinema. Cavell says:

I have spoken of film as satisfying the wish for the magical reproduction of the world by enabling us to view it unseen. What we wish to see in this way is the world itself – that is to say, everything. Nothing less than that is what modern philosophy has told us (whether for Kant's reasons, or for Locke's, or Hume's) is metaphysically beyond our reach or (as Hegel or Marx or Kierkegaard or Nietzsche might rather put it) beyond our reach metaphysically. To say that we wish to view the world itself is to say that we are wishing for the condition of viewing as such.⁵¹¹

For Cavell film further "recognizes the hard Berkeleyan-Kantian truth that an event in which we participate is not knowable apart from our knowledge of our participation in it."⁵¹² This makes for Cavell, that film is a *confirmation of skepticism*, which integrates Cavell's interest on film (which he also designates as "a moving image of skepticism"⁵¹³) into his philosophical

⁵¹¹ Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102

⁵¹² *Ibid.*, p. 128

⁵¹³ "It is because I see what is not before me, because our senses are satisfied with reality, while that reality does not exist, that in *The World Viewed* I call film 'a moving image of

reflection. Cavell insists that even if we would have a piece of total cinema in front of us, we would face the same problems: *reality as a whole withdraws from our grasp and so must film*: “In screening reality, film screens its givenness from us; it holds reality from us, it holds before us, i.e., withholds reality before us.”⁵¹⁴ What Cavell argues here, does not fit our view; his position actually opposes Walter Benjamin’s claim of the access to “immediate reality”⁵¹⁵ (emerging from the inside of reality), due to the interpenetration of reality with the film apparatus. In film we access the real, as I have argued. Nonetheless Cavell’s position confirms us to reassess the core question of this analysis, into which we aim to inquire in this chapter once more under a slightly different perspective: *which part* of the withdrawing domain of the real (or of “the world itself”⁵¹⁶) is actually accessed when we are watching a movie? Is it the subjective part as being the incomplete part of the real, or can we specify something further?

Apparently, such a question contradicts our hypothesis formulated before via Heidegger. We have so far elaborated in chapter XI that Dasein can access *being-as-a-whole* in film, because Dasein doubles by viewing film, *being-in-the-world* becomes *being-in-film*, dies at the film’s end and resurrects in the world, having had the experience to access a whole. Yet in what follows I will argue that this experience of a *whole reality* in film is one of a *possibility of reality*, but not one of all possibilities of reality, because that total reality either does not exist, or will have to remain sealed for us: it is a void in this sense. This would mean that film is so real to us not because we can access something real, but because it reproduces our very condition: We merely have access to a sphere of the real of reality, but never to the real of reality itself. But what does this mean? And how would Heidegger himself answer this question?

skepticism.’ This version of hallucination is not exactly mad, but it suggests, as skepticism does, my capacity for madness.” Stanley Cavell, *Cavell on Film*, p. 117

⁵¹⁴ Stanley Cavell, *The World Viewed*, p. 188

⁵¹⁵ Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”, Third Version, p. 233

⁵¹⁶ Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102

We will see, by unfolding Heidegger's philosophy of the tool in the context of Harman's OOO, that Heidegger supports the aforementioned question by distinguishing in his tool analysis between *Zuhandenheit* (*readiness-to-hand*) and *Vorhandenheit* (*presence-to-hand*), whereby *readiness-to-hand*, according to Harman's interpretation, corresponds to what we have analyzed so far as "presence itself" to be distinguished from *presence-to-hand*, corresponding only to a part of the tool's properties, the ones that matter for human access.⁵¹⁷

I propose to recall in this context Žižek's claim that subjectivity is part of reality and therefore integrated in the "Absolute", a claim through which Žižek too refers to Heidegger:

(...) incompleteness [is] already in itself a mode of subjectivity, such that subjectivity is always already part of the Absolute, and reality is not even thinkable without subjectivity (as in Heidegger, where there is no *Sein* without *Da-Sein* as its locality) (...).⁵¹⁸

I further propose to integrate this observation of Žižek into our context rather than opposing it, in the following sense: what is present-at-hand shall be understood as that which Žižek proposes as "subjectivity", whereas the readiness-to-hand is proposed to be the things as they are in themselves, "reality". I argue so relying on Heidegger: "*Readiness-to-hand is the way in which entities as they are 'in themselves' are defined ontologico-categorically.* Yet only by reason of something present-at-hand, is 'there' anything ready-to-

⁵¹⁷ Harman is conscious that with this kind of reading of Heidegger he inverts the usual interpretation of Heidegger's tool analysis: "The typical reading of tools and presence for Heidegger, sometimes supported by the philosopher's own remarks, is that *vorhanden* refers to things in their supposed independence from humans, while *zuhanden* refers to things as wrapped up in human purposes. But in fact the opposite is the case: the ready-to-hand must always be independent, and the present-at-hand must be dependent. If tool-beings are worthy of greater esteem than the images in consciousness, this is not because they are more dependent on human *Dasein*, but the opposite." (Cf. Graham Harman, *op. cit.*, p. 52) We will support in our analysis this view of Harman on Heidegger.

⁵¹⁸ Slavoj Žižek, *op. cit.*, p. 905

hand.”⁵¹⁹ This statement, interpreted in the way Harman does (and now modifying his argumentation), would support Žižek’s position that “reality is not even thinkable without subjectivity”: according to Heidegger readiness-to-hand depends on presence-at-hand, and not the other way around.

New experiments in quantum physics seem to confirm again such a position by explicitly asserting that “at the quantum level, reality does not exist if you are not looking at it”.⁵²⁰ What this means, physics cannot tell us, but Barad’s claim - “If the measurement intra-action plays a constitutive role in what is measured, then it matters how something is explored.”⁵²¹ – can give us a clue, as I have tried to show in chapter XIII. The most important conclusion is the intra-active constitution of “reality”, and measurement being one form of intra-active intervention, such as film.

Let me now rethink Žižek’s observation in the context of film. The possibility of the concluded whole, of the Heideggerian Being concluded by Dasein in death, is what distinguishes the experience of film from that of reality. Dasein’s being-in-the-world is deprived (by the destroying nature of death) from the conclusion of Dasein’s “being as a whole”. Yet is this being as a whole of Dasein different from reality as a whole, as a totality, which even in film must remain completely sealed or a void? We have concluded before, that film is always a *slice of subjectivity* tending to create a whole, providing the subjective side of knowledge or, similar to memory, as visible in Bergson’s memory-image, a kind of “contraction of the real”⁵²². Film is also, so we have argued, an intra-active way of measuring reality, in which the world becomes film.

I propose, in what follows, to immerse ourselves deeper into the details of Harman’s theory. His notorious attempt to analyze the withdrawing and “ghostly” area of the real, “withdrawing from all human and inhuman access,”

⁵¹⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 101

⁵²⁰ Australian National University, “Experiment confirms quantum theory weirdness.”, in: *Science Daily*, 27 May 2015; available online

⁵²¹ Karen Barad, *op. cit.*, p.6

⁵²² Henri Bergson, “The Choice of Images”, in: *op. cit.*, p. 25

⁵²³ although “accessible only by allusion and seducing us by means of *allure*”⁵²⁴ allows us to approach the described problematic from a different angle. His idea of access through “allusion” and “allure” will be compared to our claim of the real of reality, which we believe to become graspable through film. It is thereby the endeavor to transpose Harman’s OOO to the area of philosophy of film, determining the area of the *real image*.

We have previously considered the claim of the real image, relying on Bazin’s total image, his “myth of total cinema”, and given the following formula: *the real of reality manifests itself in film and becomes graspable for human knowledge through film*. What brings us to the movie theatre is the desire to access the real, in the form of image. Yet *which part* of the withdrawing domain of the real (or of “the world itself”⁵²⁵) is actually accessed when we are watching a movie?

4. Solaristic Allusion

Still as an introduction and in order to understand the possibilities for applying Harman’s approach to the solaristic system, let me further explain Harman’s concept of allusion, before sketching the core of his philosophy, the quadruple object. What is most striking about Harman’s position is that he tries to deal with the real of objects and suggests an indirect form of encounter, which lies beyond their physical properties and beyond their effect on the human mind. Harman thereby claims an *allusion* to the real (we have mentioned the example of love), which he refers to together with “allure”. Since allure for Harman is connected to art, it will become one of the key concepts to focus on in our context. But let me address now the concept of

⁵²³ Graham Harman, *The Third Table*, p. 12

⁵²⁴ Ibid., p. 12

⁵²⁵ Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102

allusion. In *The Quadruple Object* Harman elucidates that with *allusion* he means to indirectly designate that which lies *beyond thought*:

We all know a way of speaking of a thing without quite speaking of it: namely we allude to it. To say ‘the tree that lies outside thinking’ is neither a successful statement about a thought nor a failed statement about a thing. Instead, it is an allusion to something that might be real but which cannot become fully present. And that is why philosophy is *philosophia*: love of wisdom rather than wisdom itself. The Philosophy of Access wants philosophy to be a wisdom about thought, when really it is a love of wisdom about that which lies beyond thought.⁵²⁶

“That which lies beyond thought” may then correspond to what other philosophers call the unthinkable – the Absolute (void), the Lacanian Real, and so on. Following this line of thought, allusion would then correspond to the solaristic principle of being without being, yet in the sense of a presence, which is absent because it lies beyond - “it cannot become fully present”. Is this the kind of presence, which has been designated as an “unfathomable abyss” (Cavell) and which lies between the thing and its reproduction (Bazin) *in form of image*? We have tried throughout to identify the abyss as something, which does not split, but unites the thing and its photographic depiction: it characterizes that from reality, which is reproduced in the photographed image, the mysterious *transference of reality* (Bazin). This real of reality in fact lies beyond and is never fully present: neither in the object, nor in its reproduction – yet it belongs to the *being of entities*.

Photography and film would then play out allusion in a special way: they refer to something *beyond* the presence of the picture and of the object, which is the real of the photographed object and not our sensory perception of it, in contradiction of what is generally thought about a photograph – that it reproduces the *visually sensible*. This kind of allusion is solaristic: the visitors refer to something *beyond themselves*, something which lies beyond thought, and which for Kelvin is accessed indirectly (*the solaristic love*).

⁵²⁶ Graham Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, p.68

Yet film *also* is displaced perception, substituting the individual perceiver (the machine's eye) by a collective, appropriating this perception. As such it gains independence from the perceiving subject, and is manifest as a real of its own: the domain of the sensual in film becomes object, gaining reality, just as Harey in "Solaris" learns to exist independently from Kelvin. The speculative real (in difference to the Lacanian Real) becomes then a solaristic concept in a cinematic way: On the planet Solaris, it is said that the visitors are stabilized neutrinos, in contemporary science called the "ghost particles" – a reification of the nothing. Such a mysterious existence challenges the rules of natural science, and is skeptically doubted by the humans in very different ways: as hallucination, evil trick and illusion. Love is thereby the allusive way of embracing the visitors, motivated by "allure".

In what follows I propose to introduce in more detail Harman's quadruple structure of objects and their qualities. "Causation" and "allure" are thereby the two concepts of accessing the real, and thus become the most important ones in our context. They will be elaborated throughout this chapter.

5. Harman's Fourfold

Harman emphasizes that the most important aspect when setting fourfold structures is the choice of the two main crossing axes, in order to determine pertinent tensions between them. He shows how for example Heidegger very early started to think in opposing poles and dual structures like light and shadow, veiling and unveiling, being as a whole and being something specific to another. Harman's fourfold, which he mostly develops in his book *The Quadruple Object* is then grounded basically on the different analysis of "things" and "tools", terms which Harman summarizes and extends as "objects". On the one hand he is thereby relying on Edmund Husserl whom he

calls a “philosopher of presence”⁵²⁷, as he establishes a threefold between sensual objects and real and sensual qualities. On the other hand Harman refers to Heidegger whom he calls a “philosopher of absence”⁵²⁸.

According to Harman, Heidegger establishes a threefold between real objects and real and sensual qualities. Through the example of the hammer he distinguishes “*readiness-to-hand*” (“*Zuhandenheit*” in Heidegger’s German terminology) and “*presence-to-hand*” (“*Vorhandenheit*”, a Heideggerian word creation as well). “The key difference is that he [Heidegger] replaces Husserl’s sensual objects with his own unique model of *real* ones. But these real objects complement sensual objects rather than replacing them.”⁵²⁹ Harman’s step consists in designating *readiness-to-hand* of tools (entities) as the real of objects, and their *presence-to-hand* as their sensual properties. He actually refers to the following quote of Heidegger in order to define *readiness-to-hand*:

The peculiarity of what is proximally ready-to-hand is that, in its readiness-to-hand, it must, as it were, withdraw [zurückziehen] in order to be ready-to-hand quite authentically.⁵³⁰

In fact (and supporting Harman’s position here), Heidegger refers, with this withdrawing of “*readiness-to-hand*”, to the “Being” of “these entities” (which is exactly not presence understood as the present). He elucidates the way in which he distinguishes the modes of *presence-at-hand* and *readiness-to-hand*:

The kind of Being which belongs to these entities is readiness-to-hand. But this characteristic is not to be understood as merely a way of taking them, as if we were talking such ‘aspects’ into the ‘entities’ which we proximally encounter, or as if some world-stuff which is proximally present-at-hand in

⁵²⁷ Ibid., p. 35

⁵²⁸ Ibid., p. 35

⁵²⁹ Ibid., p. 36

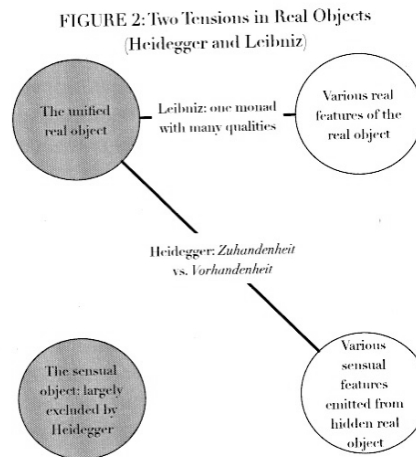
⁵³⁰ Martin Heidegger, *op. cit.*, p. 99 (quoted by Graham Harman, *op. cit.* p. 38)

itself were 'given subjective colouring' in this way. Such an interpretation would overlook the fact that in this case these entities would have to be understood and discovered beforehand as something purely present-at-hand (...). To lay bare what is just present-at-hand and no more, cognition must first penetrate *beyond* what is ready-to-hand in our concern. *Readiness-to-hand is the way in which entities as they are 'in themselves' are defined ontologico-categorically*. Yet only by reason of something present-at-hand, is 'there' anything ready-to-hand.⁵³¹

This means that Heidegger's enquiry into the "Being" of tools (as entities) reflects his philosophy in arguing against the present of presence, in maintaining that being is not presence in the sense of referring to one mode of time – the present. The Being of the entities "as they are in themselves" is *readiness-to-hand*. They have a mode of being in themselves, and that is why we can compare the term with that which we have elaborated in chapter X of this analysis as "presence of what is present", "presence itself" or as dwelling in the ecstases of temporality. In opposition their present presence is *presence-to-hand*. Curiously Heidegger sets a relation of dependence between something being present-at-hand and it being ready-to-hand: presence-at-hand conditions readiness-at-hand and not the other way around. This means that readiness-to-hand is completely secluded, so secluded that it is void or nothing, yet it can come into existence by presence-at-hand. Harman deduces: "entities withdraw into a silent underground while also exposing themselves to presence."⁵³² He underlines that this is not only true for tools, and this gives ground for his signification "objects". Thereby he shows that Heidegger establishes a threefold between real objects and real and sensual qualities, ignoring thereby the sensual objects (of Husserl). As the following graphic shows, the real object has sensual features (which are present-at-hand), but also real features (and this relation Harman compares to the Leibnizian monads).

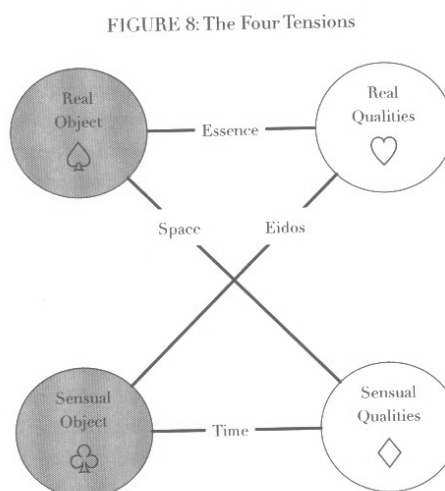
⁵³¹ Martin Heidegger., *op. cit.*, p. 101

⁵³² Graham Harman., *op. cit.*, p. 39



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Yet for Harman, Husserl's idea of a sensual object complements the notion of Heidegger's real objects. He argues that "while there may be an infinity of objects in the cosmos, they come in only two kinds: the real object that withdraws from all experience, and the sensual object that exists *only* in experience."⁵³⁴ The sensual object as Husserl describes it, according to Harman, appears in consciousness. It thereby is establishing complementary relations to the ones of real objects, as the next graphic shows: sensual objects have real features ("eidetic traits"), which only can be accessed indirectly, and "various shifting sensual profiles", which are accidental.



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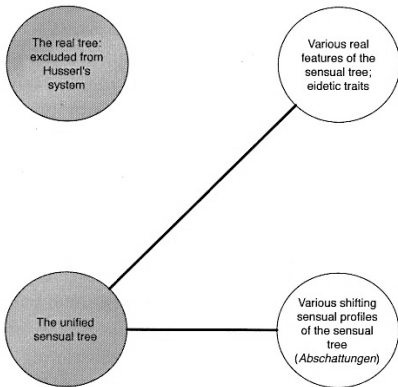
⁵³³ Ibid., p. 48

⁵³⁴ Ibid., p. 49

⁵³⁵ Ibid., p. 33

In fact, Harman joins real objects and sensual objects and joins both of them into one fourfold structure, relying on a network of relations. Harman then counts four main relations composing this fourfold structure: “time (SO-SQ) as in Husserl’s adumbrations, space (RO-SQ) as in Heidegger’s tool-analysis, essence (RO-RQ) as in Leibniz monads, and eidos (SO-RQ) as in Husserl’s eidetic intuition.”⁵³⁶

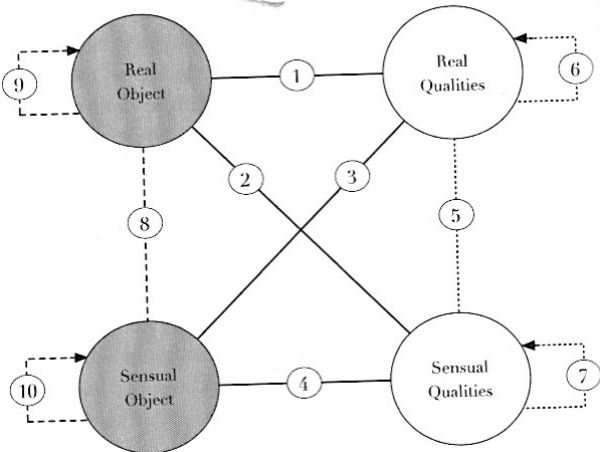
FIGURE 1: Two Tensions in Sensual Objects (Husserl)



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Yet all together, the whole structure is based on ten possible links or tensions:

FIGURE 4: The Ten Possible Links



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⁵³⁶ Ibid., p. 99

⁵³⁷ Ibid., p. 114

In what follows I will ignore the detailed names and descriptions Harman gives as to this network of relations. Although Harman's system is interesting as an example of dynamic tensions and relations in quadruple structures on reality, in the solaristic system, we will rely on the relations and concepts we have been determining so far. Yet I consider it useful to explain the four main tensions, including – again – the most basic terms, in the following summary, in spite of the danger of becoming repetitive. According to Harman there are:

- Real objects – they are in the world, yet they are mysterious, deep, independent from perception; they withdraw, are secluded, even from each other, they are “devoid of contact”.⁵³⁹
- Sensual objects – images: they only exist insofar as a perceiver is occupied with them, they are mental and can be even imaginary, like for example monsters.

These two kind of objects have then two kinds of qualities associated with them, real and sensual ones, and tensions exist between all four. Thereby Harman distinguishes four main tensions:

- The struggle between real things and real qualities is called *essence*. “(E)ssence is never directly knowable.”⁵⁴⁰ It “happens elsewhere”⁵⁴¹. Thereby I propose that essence is the kind of real, which we can never reach, but which is there, the real of reality of the solaristic system. This is of course an idea to be followed up later.
- Sensual objects and sensual qualities “do not withdraw from access”⁵⁴². They are part of experience and as such they are vacillating. The

⁵³⁸ Ibid., p. 78

⁵³⁹ Graham Harman, *Bells and Whistles*, p. 63

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 62

⁵⁴¹ Ibid., p. 66

⁵⁴² Ibid., p. 63

“fissure”⁵⁴³ between them is *time* (guaranteeing stability from one moment to the next one).

- The tension between sensual objects and real qualities is called *eidos* (“Gestalt” in German) and is accessed by *allure* in form of fusion.
- The tension between real objects and sensual qualities is *space*, described as “tension between the accessibility of things at any distance”⁵⁴⁴

But this is not all. These main links can break, be disturbed or paired, in short: become their opposites. The disturbances of the tensions appear then in the form of fission or fusion and happen when “a real or sensual object is paired with real or sensual qualities”⁵⁴⁵, for example when real objects are pairing with real qualities. Furthermore “the disturbance in the bond between a sensual object and its real or sensual qualities can occur only by splitting a bond that already exists – a kind of fission.”⁵⁴⁶ A disruption to the regular condition of the domain of the real would be then not a fissure, but a fusion with the domain of the sensual: “Thus, instead of breaking a pre-existent bond between an object and its qualities, we must produce a tension that did not pre-exist its production. I can call this process fusion.”⁵⁴⁷ Fusion occurs in the kind of links, which have formerly been characterized as struggling with each other.

⁵⁴³ Ibid., p. 65

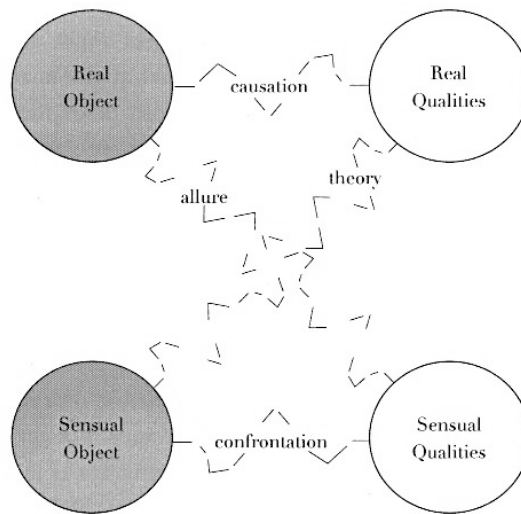
⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 78

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 68

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 68

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 69

FIGURE 7: Broken Links



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Fusion occurs in two different ways:

1. In form of “causation”: At another point of his work Harman also speaks of “vicarious causation”⁵⁴⁹, which has to do with the indirect and allusive access to objects. Harman summarizes causation as the opposite of *essence*: “When real objects are fused with real qualities allied with it for the first time, we can speak of causation, since this is where consequences unfold for the world.”⁵⁵⁰
2. In form of “allure”: “As a general term for the fusion of withdrawn real objects with accessible surface [sensual] qualities, we can use the word *allure*.”⁵⁵¹ It is the opposite of *essence* defined as the tension between real objects and real qualities, which is beyond of any kind of experience. *Allure* is the most interesting tension for the solaristic system, as it is described as a seductive power alluding to the mysterious depths of things beyond its sensual qualities and descriptive thought (– truth beyond thought). It is a kind of fusion, which

⁵⁴⁸ Graham Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, p. 107

⁵⁴⁹ Graham Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things*, p. 169

⁵⁵⁰ Graham Harman, *Bells and Whistles*, p. 69

⁵⁵¹ Graham Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, p. 104

occurs in works of art. “Allure is the presence of objects to each other in absent form.”⁵⁵²

In what follows we will see how essence, causation and allure are closely related and how these concepts matter for the solaristic system.

6. On Essence, Causation and Allure

We have seen how two aspects of Heidegger’s *being-in-the-world* are of special importance for the solaristic ontology of film: on the one hand there is the inevitable finitude of Dasein and on the other hand we have the “mode of sight from which Heidegger begins his analysis of Being-in-the-world”⁵⁵³, as Stanley Cavell puts it. A sight where, according to Cavell, the “worldhood of the world” would be “announcing itself”, is exactly where *disruption* takes place, for example a tool breaking. There “the mode of sight then brought forth discovers objects in what Heidegger notes as their conspicuousness, their obtrusiveness, and their obstinacy.”⁵⁵⁴ This *obstinacy of objects* is, according to Cavell, to be found in film (although not “All cinematic images carry this force”⁵⁵⁵ of “the worldhood of the world announcing itself”⁵⁵⁶), and I will consider this aspect from a slightly different angle: I will argue, following Harman – who gives the broken tool a reading opposite to Cavell’s⁵⁵⁷ – the ensuing: that which Cavell

⁵⁵² Graham Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things*, p. 245

⁵⁵³ Stanley Cavell, *Cavell on Film*, p. 2

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2

⁵⁵⁷ “A second scenario that Heidegger describes as present-at-hand is that of the ‘broken tool’, which no longer functions invisibly but now intrudes or awareness. The broken lamp, desk, or hammer now lying before me are perhaps independent of my invisible practical

states concerning objects present-at-hand should be applied to the objects ready-to-hand. Therefore I would rather compare the “obstinacy of objects” (carrying the force of “the worldhood of the world announcing itself”⁵⁵⁸) to Harman’s idea of *essence*: the tension between real objects and real qualities.

Harman calls Heidegger a monotonous philosopher: “Heidegger has almost no other subject than the constant reversal between absence and presence, or tool and broken tool.”⁵⁵⁹ Yet this monotony highlights Harman’s ambition to let Heidegger emerge in a completely new light: “Instead of a pragmatist, a philosopher of time, or a thinker who reduces reality to its accessibility to human Dasein, he emerges as a realist metaphysician.”⁵⁶⁰ This idea would free Heidegger in the sense that “Heidegger leads us to realism”⁵⁶¹ from his being read as a correlationist philosopher – but maybe Heidegger could equally lead us to transcendental materialism as well? As we have mentioned, but will emphasize here, the crucial point for both hypotheses is that Heidegger’s presence-at-hand of the object corresponds, according to Harman, to the Husserlian phenomenon, which is “reducing a thing to its accessibility to consciousness”.⁵⁶²

Yet Harman underlines, that this is only one side of Husserl’s phenomenon. The other is the one designated in Harman’s fourfold as the relation between sensual objects and real qualities, called *eidos*. Yet as we have already sketched, *eidos* is completely different from allure – the broken link between real objects (readiness-to-hand) and sensual qualities (presence to hand) - which is the term with which Harman introduces aesthetics in his structure.

According to Harman, the domain of the real is withdrawing from any possible relation of access: “If there were nothing but real objects and real

activity, but in no way are they independent of me.” (Cf. Graham Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, p. 53)

⁵⁵⁸ Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.*, p. 2

⁵⁵⁹ Graham Harman, *op. cit.*, p. 51

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 51

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 51

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 52

qualities, there would be no experience and no causal relations at all. Everything would withdraw into private seclusion, devoid of contact.”⁵⁶³ But then he continues: “We know them [the real qualities of real objects] indirectly, allusively.”⁵⁶⁴ That is why, a disruption to the regular condition of the domain of the real is needed, although not as a fissure, but as a fusion with the domain of the sensual. This kind of fusion is what Harman names allure: “When this occurs between a withdrawn real object and its sensual qualities, we can speak of allure, since there is something allusive about the way the object signals to us.”⁵⁶⁵

That the alluring qualities can only be grasped indirectly would then be our way to know the real object allusively: “Allure is the presence of objects to each other in absent form.”⁵⁶⁶ This reminds of course the solaristic principle of being without being, and the presence of absence of the objects in film, mentioned by Cavell. Harman is, in fact, very interested in works of art as a form of producing a special kind of allure, aesthetic perception would then be that which goes beyond thought and a way to access the impossible. However, Harman does not refer to film in any of his texts. Let us therefore try to understand better what Harman means with his definition of allure that seems to fit so well into the solaristic system:

What we find in allure are absent objects signaling from beyond—from a level of reality that we do not currently occupy and can never occupy, since it belongs to the object itself and not to any relation we could ever have with it. *Allure is the presence of objects to each other in absent form.* It is the alpha factor of the universe, found in all objects from the ground up, but gradually built up into increasingly larger and more intricate shapes. (...) Allure is the fission of sensual objects, replacing them with real ones. It is also the

⁵⁶³ Graham Harman, *Bells and Whistles*, p. 63

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 64

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 69

⁵⁶⁶ Graham Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things*, p. 245 - 246

principle of all concreteness, insofar as it points to objects apart from all relational impact that they have on us.⁵⁶⁷

This is exactly what happens on the planet Solaris with the visitors: they were sensual objects, perceptive memories, and by human allure, they have become real images, real objects. This is how Harey emerges. We might as well speak of solaristic causation here. Indeed, allure and causation are nearly the same for Harman: “causation and allure are so closely related that they turn out to be one and the same.”⁵⁶⁸

Harman calls causation the fusion between real objects and real qualities, which normally withdraw in essence. This inaccessible *essence*, for Harman, “can never come to view”.⁵⁶⁹ Yet causation is different from essence, as it is not the withdrawing tension, but the fusion, thus the disturbance of essence; and in this sense an event in an area, which has to remain eventless, yet occurring in this domain of the real: “But when real objects are fused with real qualities allied with it for the first time, we can speak of causation, since this is where consequences unfold for the world.”⁵⁷⁰

Allure and causation as solaristic tenets should be thought further. In what follows I will claim that the real image (carrying the real of reality) results from an event of disruption and thus I propose to conceive the real image as a *consequence of causation*. The real image has sensual qualities itself: it is the part, which I perceive of it. In order to transfer the image as an event into Harman’s vocabulary I could argue the following: ‘invisible light fuses with matter’ is to be set equal to Harman’s formula ‘the real quality (invisibility) fuses with the real object’.

Through causation the cinematic image emerges; the cinematic is not, I have to emphasize, as the Harman’s approach would suggest, a sensual quality of a sensual object, “reducing a thing to its accessibility to

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 245 -246 (our emphasis)

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 214

⁵⁶⁹ Graham Harman, *Bells and Whistles*, p. 69

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 69

consciousness”⁵⁷¹ (Husserl). Would it be such a sensual quality, even of a real object, no disruption or event would cause its existence. The film image thus conceals essence, and I break into this essence allusively by allure. I think that somehow this claim is not very different from the claim of Cavell we have quoted in the beginning of this passage. I recall: “All cinematic images carry this force”⁵⁷² of “the worldhood of the world announcing itself”⁵⁷³ – a term which in Heidegger’s “Thing” lecture and the fourfold has turned into the worlding of the world.

7. The Hypothesis of a Solaristic Fourfold

The solaristic system consists in the proposal to establish cinema as a special catalyst to sense the real of reality or the real of objects, a domain, which is sealed, at the same that it is carried by the real of film image. This domain of withdrawal is also the domain of the planet Solaris. The reasons are manifold, and lie in the consonance of this thesis with the philosophy of Heidegger, the philosopher of presence and absence, and already this confers on him a special relevance for film. Yet the primary resemblance with Heidegger’s fourfold structure stands out as the main reason why I propose to consider the hypothesis of a solaristic fourfold, that is, to consider the possibility for presenting a schematized summary of the solaristic system as a fourfold structure.

Just as “Solaris”, Heidegger’s fourfold is described in an allegoric way: The jug, through which he introduces the thing and its fourfoldness work like a metaphor for reality, or for “the world’s worlding”⁵⁷⁴, which remains

⁵⁷¹ Graham Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, p. 52

⁵⁷² Stanley Cavell, *op. cit.*, p. 2

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 2

⁵⁷⁴ Martin Heidegger, “The Thing”, in: *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 175

inexplicable, unless explained by the fourfold, which is onefold at the same time. I recall:

This appropriating mirror-play of the simple onefold of earth and sky, divinities and mortals, we call the world. The world presences by worlding. That means: the world's worlding cannot be explained by anything else nor can it be fathomed through anything else. (...) The united four are already strangled in their essential nature when we think of them only as separate realities, which are to be grounded in and explained by one another.⁵⁷⁵

The description of mortals, gods, sky and earth are the allegoric, poetic as well as a narrative outline of the world's worlding. In "Solaris" this worlding reaches its cinematic version: it is reproduced worlding. Yet the film functions as a catalyst of this reflection in the sense that the fourfold reminds the narrative of "Solaris". Its structure relies on the fourfold of humans, visitors, planet and earth, and each object in the film reflects this fourfold.

The solaristic poles correspond to the ones of Heidegger's fourfold as follows:

First, Earth – it remains earth in the solaristic system. It is the dwelling place of the mortals, which are described in the Thing-lecture as being *on* Earth and *under* the sky. Simultaneously Earth "is the building bearer, nourishing with its fruits, tending water and rock, plant and animal."⁵⁷⁶ As Harman underlines, Earth will always exist without the human presence and therefore its real remains withdrawing. Yet it is the experience of Earth, which permits an indirect access. Maybe earth in the movie corresponds to nature or the cosmos, which is fragile, as Kelvin's father says, yet impossible to be known.

Second, the sky: In Heidegger's fourfold it opposes Earth. The sky is full of sensual objects, we see images on the sky. This is the planet Solaris in the film, from which we always see the sensual, liquid surface: "The sky is the sun's path, the course of the moon, the wandering glitter of the stars, the

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 177-178

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 176

year's seasons, the light and dusk of day, the gloom and glow of night, the clemency and inclemency of the weather, the drifting clouds and blue depth of the ether."⁵⁷⁷

Third, the gods/divinities of Heidegger's fourfold are the visitors in "Solaris", not in an individual shape like Harey, but that which all of them (even all the multiple Hareys, the girl, the mother, etc. have in common. In fact, Heidegger's description would fit perfectly a description of them: "The divinities are the beckoning messengers of the godhead. Out of the hidden sway of the divinities the god emerges as what he is, which removes him from any comparison with beings that are present."⁵⁷⁸ The godhead in the movie is the solaristic substance, which is different from the planet: maybe the real of reality.

Fourth: Heidegger's mortals. They are the human beings, the scientists in the movie, but again they do not present individuals, but the principle of mortality. They tend for being as a whole – and thus they always are driven by the need for understanding, they study the planet and the visitors. The human beings are characterized as those who die, and this is astonishingly true for the scientists in "Solaris". Harey has to learn how to die, presence finally "Being as Being", just as Heidegger describes:

The mortals are the human beings. They are called mortals because they can die. To die means to be capable of death as death. (...) Death is the shrine of Nothing, that is, of that which in every respect is never something that merely exists, but which nevertheless presences, even as the mystery of Being itself. As the shrine of Nothing, death harbors within itself the presencing of Being. As the shrine of Nothing, death is the shelter of Being. We now call mortals mortals – not because their earthly life comes to an end, but because they are capable of death as death. Mortals are who they are, as mortals, present in the shelter of Being. They are presencing relation to Being as Being.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 176

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 176

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 176

The whole of “Solaris” presents the world’s worlding as film, Being as Being in a film. Due to its deathlike nature, film then becomes the *shelter of Nothing*, as well as the shelter of Being. The complex interaction of four poles has been developed by Harman as a network of bonds between sensual objects with sensual qualities and real objects with real qualities. Yet the solaristic fourfold of space station, planet, scientists and visitors involves bonds and dualities of its own, embedded in the solaristic ontology of film. The main concepts of the solaristic system and that which has been described in it so far as conceptual personae will be outlined as a solaristic fourfold structure, in the next chapter, concluding this analysis.

As a conclusion of this chapter, I will give some preview of the solaristic fourfold structure, namely concerning the underlying question that drives this chapter: *What happens to objects in film?* And relying on the perspective of this chapter - *what happens to Harman’s fourfold when applied to film?* What remains of Harman’s objects when they become reproduced as photographic images in motion? The answer that they capture the pure sensual qualities of sensual objects is by far too flat. In accordance with my preceding analysis I will argue that the image of film is something different and much more complex, yet I will still try to retain some of Harman’s terminology.

Similarly to Harman, I propose to understand objects in the solaristic context as the interface between us as sensory perceivers and reality as it is; objects are all entities there possibly are and their real withdraws from our intelligible grasp. The solaristic real of reality resembles the infinite and void real (“the shrine of Nothing”) we have been dealing with so far; an infinite Being as manifold as the perceptions, sensual properties or images that we can make of it, inaccessible in its infinity, tending towards the impossible real image (an image of the whole of reality, which does not exist). It is my aim to ground, within the solaristic system, this withdrawal of the infinite, which composes the real and which changes the concept of image: just as light is, in our comprehension, a dimension of its own that belongs neither to matter nor to time, so is the photographic image in film not just a sensual object or property, but a *fusion of the real*. In this sense I think it is possible to apply

Harman's terminology to our concept of the real image. I thus have proposed to try to think about the real image as a *causation* as well as allure.

The real image itself has sensual qualities: it is the part of it which we perceive. Yet not even an image of reality can be reduced, as in Harman's approach, to the sensual object or to the Husserlian phenomenon, "reducing a thing to its accessibility to consciousness".

I will then propose to continue with the following question: What is an image for the solaristic fourfold? I will argue that an image is an own pole in the quadruple solaristic structure, that of the messengers, that of the gods or of the ghosts: they are images and they come from the sphere of the real. How does such an idea emerge? From memory, as a contraction of the real (in the sense of Bergson). Harey is image, with all its cinematic, ontological implications.

I further propose that we can think of the visitors not only as neutrinos (ghost particles of nothing), but as photons, also known as the particles of light; new experiments in contemporary science point out that photons can be created out of the vacuum or out of nothing. The metaphor of light (as reflection *on* matter as well as *of* matter) relies on physical science where visible and invisible light is distinguished. Physics explains visible light as disrupted invisible light, as a kind of accident: the rupture is due to a confrontation with matter. Invisible light is a constant and infinite traveler in time and space. As it cannot pass matter, it has to transcend matter: light then bears image. This event of the image causes the visibility of matter and is a source of truth. Light hitting matter constantly emits images, thereby pointing the existence of matter. An image is nevertheless just a single slice out of an invisible multifold, which in the solaristic system, is the whole of all possible images, the real – or a white hole of the whole of images. This brings us to formulate the next solaristic tenet, one regarding image and light: the idea of the real image as an event. It complements the solaristic claim of the real image, which has been determined as follows: *the real of reality manifests itself in film and becomes graspable for human knowledge through film.*

In order to transfer the image as an event into Harman's vocabulary one could argue the following: 'the fusing of invisible light with matter' is to be

equated with 'the real quality (invisible light) fusing with the real object (matter)'. The image would then be the result of causation, and not, I have to repeat this, as the common understanding proposes, a sensual quality of an object. The image is the object in the solaristic system, which expands its Bergsonian grounding. Moreover, we have reflected on being and the sense in which we can say the following: the image conveys that which Harman would describe as essence of the real object and its real qualities, but is accessible in form of allure. We know this essence allusively. Artworks operating with the sensual qualities of images would then produce allure.

Cinema possesses thereby this double nature of being real in a double sense: as film reproduces the real image made of light, conveying essence, and it alludes, as a work of art, to the real object. Cinema does not only reproduce the sensual qualities of real objects – it searches in its own reproduction of objects for the real of objects, including that which we have called the real of reality. Cinema reproduces essence - the tension between real qualities of real objects – it seeks to write reality with reality, and awakens in the spectator a desire for this essence, the love and desire for the real, the irresistible search for truth, thereby producing allure.

In the history of Western thought light is often regarded as a metaphor for truth; I understand truth as that which I have called and developed throughout as the real of reality. Light as a metaphor for truth and as the material quality of film establishes the solaristic system as a philosophy of light. *Solaris* is literally a radiating film and a radiating planet and the visitors might as well be not neutrinos, as the scientists in the film suggest, but photons or what I call the *real image*.

It is at this point and in this sense, that solaristic philosophy suggests a completion of Harman's fourfold. The guiding question thereby is: does an image need a perceiver in order to exist? The solaristic system, designed by an understanding in which real objects are images, rejects such a hypothesis.

Trying to refute such rejection, one could argue that Harman describes sensual objects as emanating sensual qualities; he distinguishes certain qualities, which do not vary, and which transmit permanence. These are

“certain invariant qualities for experience”⁵⁸⁰ of sensual objects. Harman calls them eidoses, inspired by Husserl’s “eidetic reduction: “Thus we can use the term eidos for the tension between sensual objects and their real qualities”⁵⁸¹.

I will argue against such an interpretation: If the image would transport eidoses, real qualities of sensual objects, then it would be detached from the real object, and there would be no real image – which in our understanding transports essence. Solaristic philosophy, and I have attempted to give different approaches throughout this treatise to sustain such a thesis, argues that image is essence (in the sense of Harman): a tension between real object and real quality. Consequently, an image cannot be known in its totality, which echoes Tarkovsky’s claim: “The image is an impression of the truth, a glimpse of the truth permitted to us in our blindness.”⁵⁸²

The endeavor of solaristic philosophy literally aims at a philosophy of light and infinity, of image and immateriality, of presence and projection, of absence and the void, and finally, also that of death and finitude. In the next chapter we will draw the outline of the solaristic system as a fourfold structure, describing its links and relations between the four poles.

⁵⁸⁰ Graham Harman, *Bells and Whistles*, p. 64

⁵⁸¹ Ibid., p. 64

⁵⁸² Andrei Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 106

Chapter XVI.

Conclusions and Cardinal Tenets

of the Solaristic System

1. Philosophy and Fiction

Any fictive system relies on imagined principles but cannot do so in an unstructured or in an arbitrary way – it has to do so intentionally. Even a fictive system requires logical coherence and credibility. It can work in terms of metaphorical connotation *as a model of explanation of reality*, just as Heidegger's fourfold does. The solaristic proposal of ontology of film relies on that possibility; it appropriates a fictional film (the movie "Solaris" by Tarkovsky) to develop a model of explanation of reality as a metaphorical system with an epistemological outcome. This idea actually goes back to Paul Ricoeur, who has shown that reality *adapts* to our models of explanation: concerning reality, the models of science would function like metaphors in poetry. By "redescribing" reality they modify what they refer to. Ricoeur grounds his theory on Mary Hesse:

[S]he says that 'the deductive model of scientific explanation should be modified and supplemented by a view of theoretical explanation as metaphoric redescription of the domain of the *explanandum*' (249).

This thesis incorporates two special emphases. The first applies to the word *explanation*. If the model, like the metaphor, introduces a new language, its description equals explanation. (...) The second emphasis of the thesis of Mary Hesse focuses on the word *redescription*. 'Things themselves are 'seen as'; they are identified, in a way that remains to be specified, with the descriptive character of the model. The *explanandum* as ultimate referent is itself changed by adoption of the metaphor. One must be willing, therefore, to reject the idea of an invariance of meaning with respect to the *explanandum* and move towards a 'realistic' view of the theory of interaction. Not just our conception of rationality, but at the same time that of reality is thrown open to question: as Hesse says, 'rationality consists just in the continuous adaptation of our language to our continually expanding world, and metaphor is one of the chief means by which this is accomplished'.⁵⁸³

What Ricoeur explains here underpins the epistemological viability of our model of analysis. Ricoeur asserts that we actually *shape reality by metaphorical models of explanation*. What he deduces resembles an intra-active model, which reminds Barad's proposal of intra-activity of thought and matter (see chapter XIII of this analysis). Yet Ricoeur's assertion implies that we do not measure but *make up* these explanations, which seem to fit reality as they shape reality, in a metaphorical way, i.e. by *fictional input*: *We create reality by the way we think about it*. This hypothesis also evokes Žižek's position that the Real is partially fiction because "reality has to be supplemented by fiction: to conceal its emptiness"⁵⁸⁴, as well as his claim that "reality is not even thinkable without subjectivity".⁵⁸⁵

At the same time, the metaphorical redescription of reality is reminiscent of Harman's concept of allusion.

⁵⁸³ (Cf. Paul Ricoeur, *The rule of Metaphor: The Creation of Meaning in Language*, pp. 286-287)

⁵⁸⁴ Slavoj Žižek, *op. cit.*, p. 4

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 905

The solaristic system is building on the implications of Ricoeur's assertion, since it is deliberately setting a fictional system as a metaphor for the ontological nature of film and as a model of explanation of reality. The "solaristic conclusions" are grounded on a set of insights received from the analysis of the movie "Solaris" in dialogue with certain, well-selected positions of contemporary and modern philosophy. The obtained insights are treated as philosophical models of explanation of reality and will be summarized in a fourfold structure.

This method obviously implies that we have been "reading" into a film, a piece of fiction, in a way as we would have been reading into a written work of philosophy. It also means that we are raising, in dialogue with other works of philosophy, new kind of philosophical input, impossible to access without the film. This input is about the nature of reality, reflecting on the nature of film as a reproduction of reality, as well as a production of reality.

Our endeavor therefore has been to process the movie's inherent aesthetic sentiments and principles of thought into an epistemic setting centered on correlated concepts like *matter, motion, being, reality, world, objects, time, space, image, light, projection, reflection, diffraction, perception, death, the (in)finite, the real, the void and nothing*. These concepts are fundamental if we are to dwell on the nature of film and simultaneously determine our understanding of reality. We have regarded "Solaris" so far to be self-reflexive on the medium of film and therefore to unfurl questions on the nature of reality, which can only be raised by a film. These questions are enquiring into film's ontological nature and into that of reality.

What we have been describing in chapter III (in the introduction of this analysis), makes more sense now: Following Cavell and Epstein we have asserted that film makes us think about certain antagonisms (we have complemented the list and named 13 pairs), i.e. that film catalyzes certain principles of thought. Film is constituted and well characterized by these principles of thought. I would like to conclude this analysis by dividing the 13 listed antagonisms into four major groups. As has been confirmed throughout, these groups reflect the scope of analysis and help us to structure the summary outline of the solaristic fourfold.

The first group is focused on being and non-being, the second on the opposition between inner and outer reality, the third on reality and appearance or presence and absence whereas the fourth is based on the opposition of flow and break. The four groups of oppositional pairs are as follows:

- I. Existence and inexistence of any reality, being and nothing
- II. Matter and mind, objects and perception, subject and object, world and thought
- III. Appearance and reality, image and reality, presence and absence
- IV. Continuity and discontinuity, movement and stasis, space and time, life and death

The movie “Solaris” as a self-reflexive device of cinema conveys these antagonisms in a double sense. It questions the epistemological limits of knowledge and of exact science - as a film and as a narrative work of art. The movie emphasizes the incapacity of science to grasp and to deal with what is real – similar to how Heidegger in *What is metaphysics?* uncovers the inability of science to deal with the nothing. In order to understand what is really happening on this mysterious planet Solaris, the movie “Solaris” inquires into existential issues which are “on the edge” like death, love, existence, nothing and truth, juxtaposing imagination and actuality, emotion and reason. The movie therefore mirrors the purpose of this analysis, whose conclusions aim to write out a summary of the cardinal tenets of the solaristic system as a fourfold structure.

Do the four groups of antagonist pairs we have just named correspond to the solaristic fourfold as has been developed in the last chapter by relying on Heidegger’s fourfold? I propose to assess the pairs by providing the following fourfold attributions:

- I. Existence and inexistence of any reality, being and nothing – is attributed to “earth”
- II. Reality and mind, objects and perception, subject and object,

world and thought – is attributed to “the planet”

III. Appearance and reality, image and matter, presence and absence – is attributed to “the visitors”

IV. Continuity and discontinuity, movement and stasis, space and time, life and death – is attributed to “the mortals” (the human beings)

Why do I propose at all to keep antagonisms within the four poles of this structure? Besides Epstein and Cavell, this choice has to do with the oppositional structure Harman deduces from Heidegger’s tool analysis, opposing readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand, the sealed and the unsealed, the withdrawn real and the sensual actual. The presence-absence dichotomy is also one of the most important concepts for Heidegger, Harman going so far as to defend the claim that it is *the* “monotonous” principle of Heidegger’s whole oeuvre. We have been reflecting on Heidegger’s *parousia* for being as dwelling, therefore as conditioning its own presence and absence in various terms. The constantly antagonizing dichotomy is reflected within each of the four poles of the solaristic system. In the solaristic system reality exists and does not exist, image and matter as well as presence and absence do not oppose, death is a part of life (for we are constantly dying) and vice versa, being and nothing shelter each other, and so on.

We have seen that Harman compares Heidegger’s “readiness-to-hand” of tools with what he calls the real objects, and “presence-at-hand” with the sensual objects. For the solaristic system, we propose a comparison of these Heideggerian’s terms with Deleuze’s virtuals and actuals of the plane of immanence. Presence-to-hand would then correspond to the actuals and the virtuals would correspond to readiness-to-hand in the following sense:

The actual is defined by this passing of the present. But the virtual’s ephemerality appears in a smaller space of time than that which marks the minimum movement in a single direction. This is why the virtual is ‘ephemeral’, but the virtual also preserves the past, since that ephemerality is

continually making minute adjustments in response to changes of direction.⁵⁸⁶

The solaristic system does not propose directly to compare the ephemerality of Deleuze's virtual with Harman's withdrawing real. It establishes its bridge to Heidegger's concepts, in order to approach the mysterious 'being without being' that dominates the ontological character of the film image.

In what follows I will elucidate the implicit solaristic principles of each pole of the fourfold structure in form of a catalogue of theses, based on what has been said throughout the thesis, filling in some aspects which emerge in consequence of the fourfold structure. These solaristic theses constitute a concluding summary of the solaristic philosophy of film. What there is to say about it has been said before, although I will complement it with some further perspectives for future analysis. The network of relations designed for defining the solaristic system also brings it closer to the network described by Foucault's apparatus or "dispositif", designating an organized "system of relations" between the elements of a "heterogeneous ensemble" (all kind of possible thoughts and forms)⁵⁸⁷.

⁵⁸⁶ Gilles Deleuze, Claire Parnet, "The Actual and the Virtual", in: *Dialogues II*, Continuum, pp. 112-5

⁵⁸⁷ See: Michel Foucault, *op.cit.*, p. 194

3. 45 Theses on the Solaristic System

1. Solaristic philosophy processes the inherent principles of thought of the movie "Solaris" of Andrei Tarkovsky into an epistemic infrastructure, which is centered on film and called the solaristic system; film is thereby understood as the reproduction of reality. Therefore, the solaristic system enquires into what is understood as reality.
2. It is a property of reality to be reproducible through film; thereby it does not make sense to speak of reality as a closed entity. It should rather conceptually be established as open, in constant change and expansion by measurement, subjectivity and fiction. In this sense the solaristic system defines an openly void and multiple real, infinitely divisible in images, also referred to as a white hole of the whole of images. Some images are equal to matter, others remain immaterial, such as the images of film.
3. Film is a part of reality, as well as a producer. The cinematograph is an intra-active agent of worldmaking measurement, in the sense of Karen Barad's quantum ontology.
4. The solaristic system is structured as a fourfold.
5. Each of its four poles, which are earth, planet, visitors and humans, contain an oppositional tension in itself. Therefore, each of the four poles behaves like a principle rather than a static entity.
6. The four poles correspond to the four main conceptual personae of "Solaris": they embody and convey the conceptual solaristic key-notions.
7. Through the dramatic conflicts between the conceptual personae we can establish a *conceptual field of solaristic tensions*. These tensions are oppositional and lie in each of the four poles.
8. The pole of the visitors has Harey as conceptual persona. Harey is the presence of that which is absent. Harey is immortal, she cannot die by herself. She is annihilated with the help of the scientists; thus her condition of being is dissolved.
9. The pole of the planet is the fluid surface, the solaristic ocean and its foggy emanations and shining radiations, but also the solaristic brain. As a

conceptual persona it is the antagonist to Kelvin and an organic apparatus machine. Part of the solaristic brain lies in the visitors.

10. The conceptual persona, which has not been named so far as such is earth, another pole of the solaristic system. Earth is nature in the movie, the unknown which is feared and loved: the moving seaweed, the bushes and grasses in the opening, the horse the boy sees in the stables, the rain in which Kelvin gets wet. It is also referred to as “cosmos” and associated with fragility – so Kelvin’s angry father asserts in the beginning, by claiming that one has no right to destroy that, which one cannot understand.
11. The humans, who are the fourth pole, apparently come to Solaris to study other worlds. But that which they do not understand is nature, earth, that which stands for the world. As Snaut says: “I have to say that we don’t want to conquer any cosmos. We want to extend the earth to the utmost frontiers of the cosmos. We don’t know what to do with other worlds. We need a mirror. We’re struggling to make contact, but never find it.”⁵⁸⁸ That is why the earth is sealed in the solaristic system.
12. Earth is the place where humans are dwelling, where their being-in-the world unfolds. Humans are driven to understand and to dwell on their dwelling. That is why they go and study the planet Solaris. To live means to prepare for death, to try to know, to understand.
13. As in Heidegger’s fourfold, the humans are mortal, their being is a being-towards-death. Only humans die. Visitors cannot die. To die means to achieve knowledge.
14. Kris Kelvin is the conceptual persona who embodies this principle of preparation for death. Everything Heidegger has said about Dasein in *Being and Time* is true for Kris Kelvin. What is unsealed is the being-in-the world, the dwelling on earth.
15. The planet Solaris is the solaristic apparatus, an organic machine sensing the humans, interacting with and defying them. The planet has the character of an intra-active agent of measurement. The planet unites

⁵⁸⁸ Andrei Tarkovsky, “Solaris”, in: *Collected Screenplays*, p. 172

subject and object, it closes the gap in between, since it is the cinematograph.

16. The filmic apparatus as well as the Solaris apparatus are *world-making* and go beyond reflection: films are not mirrors but the continuation of life (to recall Syberberg). On the one hand we apparently have the image of reality, but on the other hand this image dominates reality and tends to substitute it, becoming real in itself.
17. This apparatus gives us access to “truth” or to that which we have called “the real of reality”, defined by the following solaristic principle: the *real of reality manifests itself in film and becomes graspable for human knowledge through film*.
18. The real images of film are the visitors. Harey is one image, part of all the real images. Harey’s origin is causation, based on what Harman understands as causation (see pp. 288-289 of this analysis), which is very close to allure. Harey’s causation is only possible because of Kris.
19. The planet holds the real of reality and is the producer of images of a certain kind – the visitors. Therefore, Solaris is already an issue before Kelvin goes there. The planet holds the mystery of reproduction and of the ability to reproduce even that, which is past. Deleuze says in *The Time-Image* that all images are set in a plane of immanence where present, past and future co-exist; linearity is only one possible order.
20. Harey is then an image in the following Deleuzian sense:

In Bergsonian terms, the real object is reflected in a mirror-image as in the virtual object, which, from its side and simultaneously, envelops or reflects the real: there is “coalescence” between the two. There is a formation of an image with two sides, actual and virtual. It is as if an image in a mirror, a photo or a postcard came to life, assumed independence and passed into the actual, even if this meant that the actual image returned into the mirror and resumed its place in the postcard or photo, following a double movement of liberation and capture.⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁹ Gilles Deleuze, “The Crystals of Time”, *The Time-Image*, pp. 71-2

Harey behaves like a living photograph, the one she finds of the human Harey in Kelvin's baggage.

21. The planet is beaming invisible light; even if its surface seems to be covered by a fluid substance it is radiating. The planet is *the void*. Harey embodies a *being* of the void: a being without being.
22. The planet is the shelter of nothing and the shelter of Being, in the sense of "being-as-a-whole" (*Seiendes im Ganzen*). This makes the planet into that which Heidegger names, in the fourfold, death.
23. Death is then a worldmaking agent.
24. The planet is a transcendent place – as much as film is. It is human finitude which makes the humans look for transcendence. This transcendence is death.
25. Film conveys the impossible death-vision of the world as a whole. The romantic longing for death may have helped to concretize the technical invention of film: the wish to go to the cinema corresponds to a wish for knowledge as well as a wish for death. The spectator meets the dead ones in film and indirectly experiences death. Film then concludes the "permanently-unsolved" state of being.
26. Death as finitude of being does only exist for the humans. From any other perspective it is the infinite, unamenable to thought, or just the void.
27. Death is the measurement of life – like light is the measuring agent of matter.
28. The two poles of "planet" and "earth" are like two sides of the same coin: Together they are the real of reality.
29. The two poles of "planet" and "humans" are both sensing and worldmaking. Harey would not exist without Kelvin.
30. "Visitors" and "humans" can feel attraction by allure. Harey is allure for Kelvin and causes love. In other cases the allure of the "visitors" towards the "humans" may be antagonistic. Harman says: "Allure is the presence of objects to each other in absent form."⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁹⁰ Graham Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things*, p. 245 - 246

31. Being-without-being is a cardinal tenet, which belongs to Harey as allure. It is the *presence of something, which is absent, something being there without being there*.
32. This transcendent characteristic is reminiscent of the spectral and also death-driven character of film itself; it describes the cinematographic principle of transcendence of matter towards immateriality.
33. The solaristic philosophy does not deal with a kind of transcendence which alludes to a divine entity. To transcend in the context of cinema means to transform the material into immaterial and vice versa, and in “Solaris” the same happens: yet both, film in general and “Solaris” specifically, do not demand that we change reality or switch worlds.
34. In transcendental materialism, Adrian Johnston refers to a negative *more-than-materiality*⁵⁹¹ of the subject. The difficulty thereby is (according to Žižek) to think immateriality as a correlate to materiality, as an immanent transcendence. This more-than-materiality is where the real of reality, as well as its cinematographic reproduction, moves. In “Solaris”, Harey is rematerialized. How is the question of such a real, simultaneously material and immaterial, best to be rounded up?
35. The real of reality is something, which belongs to any kind of objects: its being makes things real, whether they are material or not. That is why there is no mystery in the reproduction of reality. We also can think things as many times as we want.
36. The inquiry into the presence of the absent evoked by film and by the planet is the presence of Dasein’s being after death: the whole of being as a ‘being-after-death’ emerges as a possibility of Dasein unique to the filmic device.
37. The film image is distinct from the real image of total cinema, which has not yet been invented and which is impossible. The film image is a persistently incomplete part of the real image. It carries the real of reality.

⁵⁹¹ See: Adrian Johnston, *Žižek's Ontology: A Transcendental Materialist Theory of Subjectivity*, p. 209

38. The real image is the real of reality thought as image. Bazin's myth of total cinema helps understand this twist.
39. This real alludes to a kind of truth, which is *open* in its totality, although a whole; it unites object and subject, oscillates between projection and presence, past and future yet to come; it is never absent. The cinematographic image is thereby considered to be a kind of magnifying glass; it frees presence from physical being. Tarkovsky claims: "The image is an impression of the truth, a glimpse of the truth permitted to us in our blindness."⁵⁹²
40. Being on *Solaris* means being on a planet, which constantly beams light and images; it does so in a way that inside and outside, future and past, death and life cannot really be separated.
41. The *event of image* causes the visibility of matter.⁵⁹³ Images are the visible emerging from the invisible by rupture or fissure, as an *event*. *In summary, the image is a fissure of the real and thus differs from sensory perception.* The image emerges from the real and should thus always revert to it, be a key to the real. An image is a single slice out of an invisible multifold void. An image is not, as common sense often suggests, a mere sensual object from which the real completely withdraws.
42. This fits with Tarkovsky's take on the image: "what is known as the 'idea' of the image, many-dimensional and with many meanings, cannot, in the very nature of things, be put into words. But it does find expression in art."⁵⁹⁴
43. The *image as an event* finds an unexpected application in the late Heidegger, who refers to event – *Ereignis* – in *Identity and Difference* as

⁵⁹² Andrei Tarkovsky, *op.cit.*, p. 106

⁵⁹³ To recall what has been said before: Physics distinguishes between visible and invisible light. Visible light is born by accident; it is disrupted invisible light: the rupture is the confrontation with matter itself; light is hindered by matter to travel. Invisible light is therefore a constant and infinite traveler in time and space; as it cannot pass matter, it has to transcend matter: light bears than image. To the *event of the real image* the *visibility of matter* is immanent. *Light confronting matter thus constantly beams images, indicating the existence of matter*, and is to be understood as a fractural event.

⁵⁹⁴ Andrei Tarkovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 104

an *appropriation* through sight. There is this double etymology to *Ereignis*: on the one hand, it comes from “to make something your own or appropriate”, *aneignen*, which in German has the root of *eigen*, own; on the other hand the eyes come in. The ancient word *eräugen*, to regard, is the second root of *Ereignis* in German, according to Heidegger.⁵⁹⁵

44. The idea of a solaristic ontology of film - experimentally seeking to directly appropriate a fiction film as a system for philosophy - is conceivable itself as a model of conceptual art, or as an artistic gesture.
45. The endeavor of solaristic philosophy proposes a philosophy of light and infinity, of image and immateriality, of presence and projection, of absence and nothing in action, and finally, also of death and finitude.

3. Further Perspectives

What does the solaristic system mean?

I have aimed to develop a philosophy of film, based on setting a film in emancipated dialogue with recognized works of philosophy. Of course I have not included all that can be said about “Solaris”. I have opted to primarily focus on those aspects which best support new insights on the nature of reality, and on those elements to be considered self-reflective on the nature of

⁵⁹⁵ “The event of appropriation (*Ereignis*) is a word belonging to common language and means “event”. But Heidegger’s use of it is more (1) ‘abstract’ in the sense of being infinitely removed from everyday events and yet of being that which is so close to us that we cannot see it, and (2) ‘concrete’ in its use of the very *roots* of that word: *er-eignen* (*eigen*= own, thus to come into one’s own, to come to where one *belongs*) and *er-äugnen* (*Auge*=eye. This is the real etymological root of *er-eignen*), thus to catch sight of, to see with the mind’s eye, to see face-to-face.” (Cf. Joan Tambauch, “Introduction”, in: Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, p. 14); see also: “Das Wort Ereignis ist der gewachsenen Sprache entnommen. Er-eignen heißt ursprünglich: er-äugen, d.h. er-blicken, im Blicken zu sich rufen, an-eignen”. (Cf. *ibid.*, p. 100-101). Therefore the translator has chosen to translate *Ereignis* with ‘event of appropriation’.

film, and inquiring into the nature of reality. This is the main endeavor of solaristic philosophy of film.

What further might be missing?

During my investigation I have been asked several times about the role of the music in “Solaris”, which has been astonishing in its time. Composer Eduard Artemiev has worked with electronic music, developing own devices to do so, long before our time in which a sound-effect is a mere computer plug-in. Opting not to undertake my own analysis of the music, I also have avoided a classical analysis of formal elements to substantiate my reading of “Solaris”. I have opted to do so to avoid a descriptive thesis.

What I did instead was basing my analysis on the movie as an organic whole, where all elements play together to narrate what I have been describing in the introduction as the plot of the film. This is also the reason why this plot description (part of the introduction) is unusually long and complemented with images: I have tried to narrate what one sees by watching “Solaris”. The meaning of the film lies in its narrative, which is conveyed by image and sound, which are in turn showing characters in certain environments in action.

As in any movie, there are many elements shaping the film’s form: actions and dialogues, music, camera movements, angles and framing, as well as rhythm and light. All these elements construct the meaning of each sequence together, in a constant interplay, followed by the next sequence and following the one before. Analyzing the movie, nothing can be considered out of context. As any film, “Solaris” is a complex *Gesamtkunstwerk*, and in my presentations about the film and about the solaristic system I am frequently using video-clips to support what I am saying. An interactive, digital e-book, linking to clips from the film, would be certainly the right form of publication.

What could some issues for further analysis be?

I must admit that I have not been exploring all possible references and cross-connections of “Solaris” with the wide range of philosophers that one could include to sustain and further develop the solaristic system. In that sense the solaristic philosophy is incomplete. Yet I have been trying to develop its main aspects by carefully choosing a network of philosophers to be considered as especially relevant. I also have justified my choice in terms of special relevance and aptness for this dissertation’s purpose. Moreover, part of the development of the solaristic system was to show where it is positioned within philosophy of film, and which kind of philosophical insight into film such an analysis can rely upon. Heidegger has thereby become central for the dialogue with “Solaris” and the solaristic system can be read as a Heideggerian system. This is an innovation, in the sense that most of philosophy of film is explicitly based on Cavell or on Deleuze, which have used film within a certain system of philosophical thinking. In order to use their insights on the subject of film, one has to thoroughly frame what they say about it within their broader projects of philosophy. In this dissertation, I have shown that there are other philosophers, who can contribute to the major philosophical problems raised by film – and I am sure that there are even more.

Therefore, rather than complementing the solaristic analysis with other possible references, I would propose a second volume of philosophy of film, based on another, similarly relevant and complex film, where other aspects of philosophy raised by film can be investigated further and in the end be put into dialogue with the solaristic system.

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- Most of the photographic images used are film stills from the film “Solaris” by Andrei Tarkovsky, cinematography by Georgy Rerberg; these images do not have a footnote
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